■ Lifestyle/C1 ■ Across/A17 ■ World/A10 ■ Business/B1 ■ Metro/A22

There's something about Surigao

'Jusiteng' turf battle leads to hostage-taking

Egyptian hostage freed, says he was treated well

Gov't misses budget deficit target

LTO okays use of vanity plates

PRESIDENT ARROYO: A time of brilliant triumph

DE LA CRUZ: I'm happy now. Thank you so much for your help.

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BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

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'A wonderful moment'

GMA, nation rejoice over Angelo's release

17 days of terror

By Juliet Labog-Javellana and DJ C. Cabacungan Jr.

SEVENTEEN days of horror for Angelo de la Cruz ended yesterday.

"Our long-awaited vigil ... is over," President Macapagal-Arroyo, looking as though a massive weight had been lifted off her shoulders, told the nation in a televised statement at about 5:15 p.m.

"It's a wonderful moment," she said.

De la Cruz, abducted by Iraqi militants on a Baghdad bridge on July 4, on July 6 (Iraq time) as he drove his truck carrying a cargo of fuel across from Saudi Arabia, was in town in the end, witnesses said.

News of the release of the 46-year-old truck driver and father of eight by Iraqi militants touched off throbs of jubilation among his family, relatives and friends in his home village of Bonifacio in Sitio Pempengo, and rejoicing everywhere else in the country. (Story on this page.)

Mr Arroyo, in her televised address, also emphatically said she did not regret her decision to pull out the Philippine troops from Iraq in order to free De la Cruz's life—a decision slammed by the United States and other allies, which viewed it as a dangerous capitulation to terrorists' demands.

Rejoining her cabinet, Mr Arroyo also said: "With over one million OFWs [Overseas Filipino Workers] in the Middle East and over 4 million [worldwide], my government has a deep national interest in their well being, wherever they live and work."

JUBILATION erupts in Bonifacio, Mexico, Pampanga, when the news comes of Angelo de la Cruz's ear and we that he is free, alive and well and on his way home after they kept an anguished, prayerful vigil for his safe release from captivity the past 17 days.

Euphoria sweeps town, grand welcome set

By Tonette Orejas
PEP Central Luzon Desk

MEXICO, Pampanga—A wave of jubilation swept Angelo de la Cruz's family and friends when footage of him in the custody of Philippine officials in the United Arab Emirates was shown on television here yesterday afternoon.

Weeping for joy and hugging one another, they expressed thanks to President Macapagal-Arroyo for her support of the family and for the government's efforts to secure Angelo's release.

"We're quite happy but we will be really, really happy once we see the President holding our brother. Thank you to everyone," said Angelo's brother Feliciano Jr.

The small community in Barangay Bonifacio where De la Cruz's family lives is in the throes of preparing for the homecoming of the 46-year-old truck driver taken hostage by Iraqi militants in Baghdad on July 4.

The tasks of cooking, welcoming guests, mounting a program, managing traffic, even cleaning De la Cruz home, were assigned to various persons in the community at a meeting that started at 1:30 p.m. yesterday in the house of Barangay Captain Alfredo Pineda.

Earlier in the day, Malacañang advised Gov. Mark Lapid to start preparations were malicious allies word of the hostage's release.

Lapid told De la Cruz's relatives and local officials that outgoing

Gov't mum on biting NY Times editorial

MALACAÑANG was game when American talk show host Jay Leno last week took a swipe at the Philippine government's withdrawal of its 51 member contingent from Iraq.

But it was silent yesterday on a scathing editorial by The New York Times in its July 19 issue titled "A Filipino Retreat," which described President Macapagal-Arroyo's decision to pull out as a "return" for terrorists.

Mr Arroyo's spokesperson Ignacio Bunye refused to comment on the editorial. He was unavailable, Bunye's chief Lorelei Fajardo said, because he was in the middle of an act of some kind.

"Tinawanan ni Jay ang mga nangyayari sa Pilipinas [Jay laughed at what's happening in the Philippines]," she said.

Bunye's deputy Jesse Mercado said he was not aware of the editorial. He was unavailable, Bunye's chief Lorelei Fajardo said, because he was in the middle of an act of some kind.

"Tinawanan ni Jay ang mga nangyayari sa Pilipinas [Jay laughed at what's happening in the Philippines]," she said.

THE GLARE of media cameras proves so senseless that it wouldn't let a sleeping dog lie, it being the Dela Cruz pet dog, Dexter the family home, the dog spends the night with a "galaw" (a street child) whose reporters called Junior.

'Tata lost so much weight, we'll cook crispy pata'

By Tonette Orejas
PEP Central Luzon Desk

"MUSMOS na 'i Tito. Bayaan na. Pinayat kasi [our weight. He is very thin]. Let's cook his favorite food when he arrives home."

Judith de la Cruz, 26, eldest daughter of Feni Domingo Angelo de la Cruz, blurted this words as she watched television with her siblings in the Clark Development Corp. conference room yesterday.

She believes until De la Cruz, who stands 5'5" and weighed 130 lb before he was captured, had lost nearly but a lot of weight.

Stink spoils fertility rites in Obando

By Veit Carreros

OBANDO, Bulacan's "Santa Clarang pinong pino" is leaving besieged with so many pilgrims for clues on on his birthday.

Pilgrims who danced in the streets jumping for his two during the famous little town's last fiesta were disappointed from the outset, it seemed, to find by the stench of pig crap ("barong baboy") being cooked.

It was actually the dumpsite (coming) leaving Navotas.

Consumers face new round of power rate hike

By Sigrid L. Ho

NATIONAL Power Corp. Disposal is pushing for the removal of the 46-centavo cap on every kilowatt hour (kWh) of its purchased power cost adjustment (PPCA) to enable it to push its rates closer to the true cost of generating power.

The lifting of the cap will increase Napocor's losses, but will enable its higher electricity rates for consumers because the bigger PPCA will be passed on by Napocor customers like Manila Electric Co. (Meralco) to their customers.

Meralco, the country's biggest power distributor, gets more than 50 percent of its power supply from Napocor.

The PPCA allows Napocor to recover fluctuations in the prices of electricity that it buys from independent power producers (IPPs).

Napocor president Regulo Lloreja said the state firm's board had passed a resolution that called for the removal of the 46-centavo cap, which President Macapagal-Arroyo imposed during her Labor Day speech in 2002.

Ms Arroyo issued the order until the widespread clamor for the scrapping of the purchased power adjustment (PPCA) a mechanism that allows Meralco and other distribution utilities to recover the cost of power they buy from Napocor and the IPPs.

The IPPs were given guarantee contracts by the Ramos administration to encourage them to invest in the country during the acute energy crisis in the 1990s.

Discussions with the Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC) on the lifting of the cap were now

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

WEDNESDAY, JULY 21, 2004

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Eastern parts of Visayas and Mindanao will experience rain and cloudy skies while the rest of the country will have partly cloudy skies with isolated rain showers or thunderstorms in the afternoon or evening.

Second FRONTPAGE

Banks renew Maynilad bond

By Philip C. Tubeza

FOREIGN banks have renewed the $120 million performance bond of Maynilad Water Services that was set to expire at the end of the month, ongoing Justice Undersecretary Manuel Teehankee said yesterday.

Teehankee made the announcement on the deadline for the government to give notice to withdraw the bond each July 31.

"The banks have notified the Metropolitan Waterworks Sewerage System and the Department of Finance of their unconditional renewal of the bond for another year to July 2005," Teehankee said.

The performance bond, which Maynilad was required to put up when it obtained the concession to supply water services to the western half of Metro Manila, was an undertaking that the Lopez-owned utility was capable of completing the job. It comes in the form of an irrevocable standby letter of credit with a number of foreign banks, led by Citicorp International.

The bond was supposed to expire on July 31 after Maynilad failed to renew it in June.

The MWSS has been trying since last year to withdraw from the deal after Maynilad failed to pay its concession fees which had ballooned to P84 million. It was stopped from doing so by the Quezon City court hearing the rehabilitation and debt petition of Maynilad.

Last April, the Supreme Court reversed the lower court and said the government could not tolerate from the bond.

The MWSS board recently acted to withdraw the entire $120 million as the unpaid concession fees have grown to P100 million as of May 31. It has until July 31 to do so.

"The bill [from a contractor] and a letter coordinated with the DOF which will formulate an advice on a new rehabilitation or takeover plan," Teehankee said.

Teehankee headed the government panel that earlier negotiated with Maynilad and its creditor banks in hammer out the compromise agreement, known as Amendment 2 to Maynilad's concession agreement, that would pave the way for a government takeover of the water utility.

The National Economic and Development Authority earlier recommended the termination of the concession agreement and the MWSS is now formulating a new takeover plan for the Maynilad concession and would allow the government to come from the $120 performance bond without disruption of water services.

Maynilad officials have protested the recommendation of the agreement, warning that the government's unilateral withdrawal of the agreement would only lead to further disputes which Maynilad wants brought to an end.

Rufino Pineda Secretary Jeanette Imasong said the bayad-center that the compromise agreement had become moot after the SC ruled that government could withdraw the bond.

Asked why Maynilad would have to be rehabilitated under a different scheme when the compromise agreement had been effectively sealed by the SC ruling last month.

"Rehabilitated 2 do longer exists. Here we are [it is no more]," Imasong said.

She said the government was now preparing the paper documents to withdraw the entire performance bond and not just P100 million as agreed upon in Amendment 2.

"There is an SC ruling and it should be followed. We are now preparing the documents to be able to execute the SC decision," she said.

The government pursued the compromise agreement earlier this year to avoid the financial collapse of Maynilad, a joint venture of the influential Lopez family's Benpres Holdings and the French-based Suez Group, now known as Global Pinoy, and secure continued water services for Maynilad customers.

The agreement came under severe criticism and was branded by critics as a virtual bailout of the Lopezes.

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Despite bail, Oakwood mutineers still detained

By Nicole Pipa
and Philip C. Tubeza

SOLDIERS who participated in last year's failed Oakwood mutiny are still in military detention despite being granted bail by a Makati City court.

Armed Forces of the Philippines spokesperson Lt. Col. Daniel Lucero said the 27 soldiers were granted bail by Makati Regional Trial Court Judge Oscar Pimentel are still facing charges in the military court.

"Thus, they cannot be released from detention," Lucero said in a statement released yesterday.

"Although bail was granted to the 27 soldiers, this does not in any way affect their continued detention," Lucero said.

Col. Julius Magno, officer in charge of the AFP's Office of the Judge Advocate General, said that denial of bail for the leaders of the mutiny namely, Capt. Gerardo Gambala, Capt. Nilo Maestrecampo, and Lt. Sgt. Alfredo Trillanes IV "shows that the evidence against them was strong."

Another accused, Capt. John Andres, is still at large.

Magno said the AFP would file a motion for reconsideration, on the argument that granting bail to "military personnel is against the Articles of War and existing jurisprudence."

In cited a previous case, Commendador vs. De Villa, where the Supreme Court pronounced that "the proper sanctions of the military should be enough reason to exempt military crimes from the constitutional coverage on the right of bail."

Magno said the soldiers are charged for violating Articles of War 96, "which penalizes conduct unbecoming of an officer particularly relating to common offenses of coup d'etat."

Quoting a Supreme Court decision on the case of Col. Rolando Abadilla, Magno said, "a man in uniform belongs to public service. He represent credentials are the absolute limits to the constitution, the flag, the country and the people. However, when he defies authority and discipline, when he commits offenses or takes arms against the very people and government he had sworn to protect, he becomes an outlaw and a disgrace to the military."

In a related development, the Department of Justice will ask the Makati Regional Trial Court to reconsider its decision to grant bail to the 27 of the 31 junior officers and enlisted men involved in the failed Oakwood mutiny.

"I'm not happy with the decision," Acting Justice Secretary Ms. Merceditas Gutierrez said in a press conference at the DOJ. —Julie S. Bigcada, PDI Mindanao Bureau

PNP chief 'wannabes' forge agreement

By Christine F. Reganora

TOP OFFICERS aspiring to become the next chief of the Philippine National Police yesterday forged a "gentlemen's agreement" to prevent the rumor from dividing the organization.

The agreement was reached during a meeting among Deputy Director-Generals Edgar Aglipay and Victor Ela, Directors Ricardo de Leon, Enrique Cabang and Avelino Razon, and Chief Supt. Oscar Calderon in Camp Crame.

The six are members of the Senior Officers Placement and Promotion Board headed by Aglipay, the PNP's second-in-command.

"I met with the officers this morning and we agreed that we would support whoever is designated by the President," Aglipay told reporters.

Straight for comment, Ela confirmed the pact but was careful not to call it a "gentlemen's agreement." The chance of the next PNP chief, to be appointed, now the sole prerogative of the President.

Aglipay, the most senior of the generals vying for the job, admitted that he was hoping to succeed PNP chief Director General Hermogenes Ebdane Jr. "I'm still praying," he said.

Aglipay's prayers, however, should include the early retirement of his boss. Otherwise, should Ebdane decide to stay on until his mandatory retirement on Dec. 10, Aglipay and Cabang, who are both scheduled to retire before the end of the year, would lose their chance to head the police agency.

But even if Ebdane steps down before Aglipay's scheduled retirement in September, the latter would still have to deal with the provision in the PNP law that bars officers with less than six months left in the service from being appointed to any post.

But Aglipay yesterday found a supporter in Senate Justice chairman Joker Arroyo, who has been backing the latter's campaign against illegal drugs.

FLAG ON FIRE
A member of the militant group Pamalakaya burns an American flag on Manila Bay near the United States Embassy on Roxas Boulevard in denunciation of the group's protest against US violations of the Philippine troops withdrawal from Iraq. LEO ARCEO

Palace to continue wooing Bro. Eddie

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

MIKE mum's value no for an answer.

Although losing presidential candidate and evangelist Eduardo "Brother Eddie" Villanueva has turned down an offer by Presidential Management Secretary Jose Rono to be adviser, Malacañang said reconciliation efforts would continue.

"These efforts will be seamless, only pursued until such time that leaders of all opposition groups are encouraged to participate and do their share in moving this country forward," presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said in a statement.

The President's reconciliation effort may "be the Filipino people and not the political consequence," he said. "We cannot talk about national development with a divided people, and we have faith in all Filipinos coming together behind the fight for change."

Bunye issued the statement after Villanueva spoke to clarify an earlier report that he had reconciled with Ms Arroyo after the election bets were.

According to the source of the report, Villanueva had agreed to "support the President and his programs" and that two of his trusted leaders would be given government positions, one with Cabinet rank.

Villanueva, leader of the Jesus is Lord movement, clarified that Ms Arroyo had asked him if he could be an adviser and when he turned her down, she asked if there were "qualified people" in his Bangon Pilipinas party whom she could appoint.

Villanueva and the President paid him a visit in his house in Makati on July 5. Bangon spokesperson Luis Simon said the President actually paid him one midnight visit, the first was on March 27.

Ms. Arroyo announced even during the election, that if she won, she would invite the opposition and other political forces to her government of unity. She said high positions awaited them in her new administration.

So far, there have been no visits. Among her defeated rivals, former Secretary Raul Roco and Sen. Panfilo Lacson have softened their stance and have called for support for her administration.

Villanueva said he had considered, not so Ms Arroyo but to the people.

Meanwhile, administration solons yesterday chided the opposition for rebuffing the President's reconciliation efforts.

Santiago People's Coalition Rep. Douglas Cagas of Davao del Sur and Lakas-CMD Rep. Antonio Cuenco of Cebu City said Villanueva failed to appreciate the fatherly-mental duty of the President, which is to unify the nation. They called on him to respect the mandate she won in the May polls.

Cagas, NPC district chief, said by turning down the President's reconciliation offer, Villanueva disappointed many Filipinos. "It's sad that Bro. Eddie who has been espousing the Christian value of peace has rebuffed an offer made by no less than the President of the country."

GMA's new direction: People first

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

SEE will be the people first.

This is the "new direction" that President Macapagal-Arroyo will set in her State of the Nation Address on Monday, Malacañang said yesterday.

Presidential Spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said the theme of the President's speech is "A new direction, putting people first in an era of change and national renewal."

"The President will try to convey the vision or program of government for an entire presidential season," Bunye said.

The term, traditionally delivered on the last Monday of July at the opening of Congress, is the President's assessment of conditions in the country and contains the programs that he or she intends to pursue in the next six years.

Ms Arroyo will deliver her State of the Joint opening of the 13th Congress at the Batasang Pambansa in Quezon City on Monday afternoon.

Montayre no-show at DOJ hearing

By Philip C. Tubeza

ANTI-CORRUPTION Czar Linda Ehipani Montayre yesterday failed to show up at a justice department hearing on charges that she was involved in a plot to overthrow the government and assassinate key government officials, including House Speaker Jose de Venecia.

Fernando Aduca, Montayre's lawyer, said his client was suffering from high blood pressure.

He showed a medical certificate from St. Luke's Hospital which said that Montayre, an ex-nun, had hypertension complicated by diabetes.

State Prosecutor Ma. Victoria Aduca decided to issue the preliminary investigation on July 29.

Aduca insisted that his client was innocent and said that she would file a counter-affidavit.

"It is a case of political harassment because President Macapagal-Arroyo hates Montayre a lot," Aduca said.

In a letter to Acting Justice Secretary Ma. Merceditas Gutierrez early this month, Montayre denied that she was one of the alleged masterminds of a reported plot to assassinate De Venecia and to carry out bombing attacks in Metro Manila.

"I am not involved in criminal activities of any kind that (President) Arroyo and her cohorts imagine," she said in her letter.

Former police senior Supt. Roberto Calimlim, who has been charged with rebellion, earlier tagged Montayre as among the alleged masterminds behind a plot to bomb the food, government and defense department buildings and the Sarmiento de San Antonio in Forbes Park last last month.

Besides Calimlim, the others who have been charged for alleged participation in the plot are Amorsolfo Dador II Pacifico, Antonio B. Mercader, Alfie Ben Asmin Ilen, Fred Dimmanis, Pilliam Ramos, a certain Lord, alias Buggy; Jun Bailey, Rodrigo Ramos, Nonoy Bolano, and several John and Jane Does.

Joe de V shows who's the boss of the House

By Carlito Pablo

SO WHO'S the boss?

Some 190 legislators belonging to several political parties yesterday declared that Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr.'s leadership was "unconcerned and enjoys the backing of a huge majority."

The lawmakers issued the statement as response to the warning aired by Bayan Rep. Satur Ocampo (UNC) on Monday about an anti-De Venecia "coup" supposedly being hatched by a bloc led by the Kabuhlan ng Mahirang Pilipinas (Kampi) party.

Yesterday, Kampi, the party founded by President Macapagal-Arroyo when she ran for senator in 1998, entered into a coalition with the Liberal pro-administration Liberal Party.

The Kampi-LP coalition presents a counter force to the De Venecia-led Lakas-Christian Muslim Democrats and its principal coalition partners the Nationalist People's Coalition.

"Allies of the administration never considered putting up a candidate for speaker against De Venecia," according to Rep. Prospero Pichay (Lakas, Davao City), a De Venecia ally.

"Lahatan ito ng numero sa pare-parehas," Bagtasbo said in the statement.

Even more for Kampi president Rep. Ronald Dulay (Antipolo City) contended there was "no emergency with anyone who can challenge De Venecia.

"Kampi and I are not going to support a challenger against De Venecia," Dulay said in an interview.

Pulse strategists that Kampi was evolved principally to lend political support to the programs of President Arroyo, who remains the party's chair.

"Speaker De Venecia's leadership in the 13th Congress is unconcerned," Cebu City Representative Raul del Mar and Antonio Cuenco said in the statement.

Iloilo Rep. Gerry Salapuddin Biadnis, in the same statement, lamented the efforts to downplay the role Lakas played in gaining approval for the reform measures initiated by Ms Arroyo.

"We as a party have consistently supported the President's legislative agenda," Salapuddin said. "Lakas has the track record to prove it and we are proud of that record."

De Venecia's 190 supporters include progressive party-list legislators.

"Why? Is there anyone else?" asked Bayan Rep Bonifacio Ilagan in an interview.

Like Pinto, Bondoc acknowledged that no one in the House had the stature to challenge De Venecia for the speakership.

Jim Ellewin, chief of staff of Antipolo Rep. Crispin Beltran, said in another interview that De Venecia had the numbers to assure his election to a fourth term as Speaker.

LP, Kampi forge accord

By Fe B. Zamora

THE LIBERAL Party and the Kabuhlan ng Mahirang Pilipinas (Kampi) formalized their alliance yesterday with votes to reform the House of Representatives into a "responsible, proactive and effective institution."

In the document, there were reports that the coalition is plotting a coup d'etat to replace Speaker Jose de Venecia with Senior Rep. Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III.

Rep. Prospero Pichay disproved this. "How can there be a coup? Until today there is no Speaker of the House. All of us are congressmen. Maybe after July 26, that question will be answered," he said.

LP Rep. Florencio Abad said he was hoping to "talk it out" with De Venecia hopefully before July 26, when the 13th Congress formally opens. "We would like this coalition to play a substantial role in the functioning of the House and we would like to see the coalition members occupying positions in the committees," he said.

Forgotten Iraq victim buried

SAN FERNANDO CITY—While media and national attention was focused yesterday on released hostage Angelo de la Cruz, another overseas worker was buried in simple ceremonies here.

Raul Carlo Flores, 37, the civil engineer who was killed in a car bomb attack in Baghdad in June, was buried at noon beside his mother at the Holy Sacrifice Memorial Park in Barangay Lingsat.

Grieving relatives expressed their anger and bitterness at the terrorists, at the government and at life in general. They said Raul had been "abandoned" by the government.

In his brief eulogy for his son, Antonio Flores, 73, expressed disappointment that Raul could not find a job here despite his qualifications and had to find one in a risky place like Iraq.

He criticized the Overseas Workers and Welfare Administration (OWWA) here for refusing burial benefits for his son.

Raul had failed to pay the OWWA membership fee before he went working and forfeited the assistance, he said.

Flores said he went to the OWWA office here complaint for his son's case, pointing out that De la Cruz would be receiving a windfall from the government.

Flores also criticized the Social Social Security System for requiring him to submit a death certificate which he would have to go to Baghdad to get.

He thanked the audacious rebels, toward the end of his remarks, he cried out to God and asked only his son had to die in the bomb attack.

President Macapagal-Arroyo and First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo sent cordial bouquets that were prominent. It displayed boards finally sealed coffin. Betsy La. Aduca, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

TREE LITTLE love that could: Row glorious on the day of freedom for their caretakers Angelo de la Cruz. —AP

Consumers face new round of power rate hike

Front page A1

ruptions, according to Macapa. The ERC earlier said that it would take appropriate action against the erring PPCs.

Huge losses

Macapa said Napocor wanted the rate increase granted as soon as possible because it was contributing to the state firm's ballooning losses, which threw the national government's budget deficit even further.

The cap on the PPCs of Napocor, he pointed out, did not limit the charges that they could levy on the latter customers by 50 centavos per kWh.

During the first year of the cap's implementation, Napocor had to borrow P800 million to pay for costs that could not be passed on to consumers.

Last year, Napocor incurred a P112.23-billion net loss, more than five times the P16.16 billion loss it posted in 2001. The loss is expected to grow to P134.5 billion this year.

Napocor's position on the lifting of the cap had initially been refused in Malacañang by Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita, who said that it would take a presidential decision to lift the cap.

Raphael Lotilla, the president of Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. (PSALM), said Napocor's board resolution authorizing Ermita to sign the PPCs' contracts did not specify any limit to the PPCs' cap.

Increase of P1.87 centavos

Napocor and PSALM's joint petition to increase the rate per customer's class by an average of P1.87 centavos per kWh, all over the country was based on the assumption that there was no cap.

The new rates, once approved by the ERC, would cater Napocor's claim to P4.56 per kWh from P2.377 in Luzon, to P4.39 per kWh from P3.824 in the Visayas, and to P5.12 per kWh from P5.09 in Mindanao.

The new rates would allow Napocor to break even on its operation and allow it to achieve a return on rate base (ROR) of 4 percent, a measure of profitability.

Lotilla said the achievement of the 4-percent ROR based on the proposed Napocor rates did not take into consideration the existing PPCA cap.

No respite

Consumers have had no respite from rising costs of power, particularly with the implementation of zero recovery mechanisms by the government-owned firms, which caused Meralco's monthly electricity charges by 13.27 centavos.

Just this July 9, Meralco filed an application for its third GRAM, which seeks to increase the generation component of its charges by 17.27 centavos per kWh.

Another cost recovery scheme that Napocor incorporates in its rates is the Incremental Currency Exchange Rate Adjustment Rider (ICERAR), which allows Napocor to offset the effects of exchange rate fluctuations on its rates.

The ERC recently approved several hikes in Napocor, which increased its rates by 20.04 centavos per kWh.

Like the GRAM, the hikes is filed every quarter.

Customers in the Visayas will soon have to pay P2.51 per kWh, up 23 centavos from the old rate of P2.29. Minimum users will be charged 30 centavos higher per kWh at P1.31 from P1.13.

Second round

The ERC also approved Meralco's GRAM application last month, the second ever for the Lopez-led firm, which raised Meralco's monthly electricity charges by 13.27 centavos.

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Stink spoils . . .

Front page A1

Residents are concerned that this is about to ruin their "cultural heritage."

Every year in mid-May, thousands of children couples flock to the church in Barangay Pag-Asa, the town center, to baptism local-choosed parents names—Sea Glen, Jun Pascual and Phoenix Sedoya or Sid-nimus—for benediction. The event also draws local and foreign media coverage.

The last time around, a church volunteer said, the stink hit the level of "unbearing." Melton Padilla, a resident of Barangay Dona, said dancers stopped in mid-stride, muttering, "What's that?"

Many others didn't say a word, but dug into their bags for something to cover their noses with, recounted the 46-year-old mother of three. The stink was not confined to residents as well, she added.

"Even the priest was not exempt to the stench," she added.

Protest action

It was nothing new, though. Padilla was among a group of residents who mounted fierce protests against the dump last year, including a picket rally just outside the Marcos town hall.

The campaign has been stepped up lately, with the military ruling Bayan Muna group. Its modalities and the environmental advocate Bangon Kalikasan Movement joining local residents. They want the "vast, walled" garbage facility closed for good, denouncing it as a health hazard to local folk.

Padilla, a member of the Puerto Parrod Council in her village, said the stench was carried to Obando in the time of the rains by the habagat, or southwest monsoon.

The argument soured in the belief that they opened a new dumpsite in the mounting complaints against the dump, which has been operating since 2001 was the first thrake the last month.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources has upheld the legality of the site, which was approved during the term of Secretary Heherson Alvarez.

Yes, it stinks, but...

In an interview over the weekend, incumbent Secretary Elisea Gozun reiterated her argue that she was about to heed the calls for the closure. But she conceded that the dump did stink.

Nobody, Gozun found a consensus drawing claims by the accused critics. But the facility had ended the crisis. She quoted results of water quality monitoring procedure conducted on May 12: "There is no heavy metal pollution seeping from the facility."

Results of other tests, on the dump's dissolved oxygen and acidity levels, were still being reviewed by the department's Environmental Management Bureau, Gozun reported.

Regular inspections

She maintained that the dump, which receives garbage coming from Kawayan and Marikina, underwent "regular inspections" by the National Solid Waste Management Commission.

The inspections were meant to "ensure that the dump's operations strictly follow the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act."

Bangon Kalikasan's president Jaya Papa insisted that the dump violated this very law which, he said, prohibited the building of such problematic sites borders of water or flood-prone areas.

The present site of the dump "used to be a lahopsed," Papa pointed out.

As for its being "controlled," Papa said, the facility accepted "unsegregated" garbage. This, he was certain, caused the serious airborne odor.

To seek solutions

The DENR has set a "technical meeting" today with representatives of the Barangay and Obando local government, as well as officials of the Department of Health and Technology, to seek solutions to the "stench and flies" coming from the dump.

Flies, too? Alvarez, shaming up!

Corrections

IN THE July 19 issue, the caption of an Agence France-Presse photo on the front page misspelled the name of the Philippine charge d'affaires in Iraq. The correct spelling is Ricardo Endaya, not Andaya.

* * *

IN YESTERDAY'S issue, the captions of an Agence France-Presse photo showing the military unit to which two members of the Philippine contingent in Iraq belonged. The two are officers of the Philippine Army not the Marines.

* * *

IN THE July 16 issue, on Page A1, a story said that the actor Richard Gomez had been involved in the campaign against the spread of HIV "the virus that causes AIDS, for the past 15 years." The figure 15th should have been 15.

* * *

Readers may send their requests for correction of factual errors in writing to Gerry Lirio, ace editor, Philippine Daily Inquirer, 5th Building, Chino Roces Avenue corner Montalban Street, Makati City; fax this to 897-8700/892-9611; e-mail ace@inquirer.com.ph and dayden@inquirer.com.ph.

Complaints about lack of fairness or objectivity may be sent to Raul Pangalangan, readers' advocate, at the same address and fax num-ber, or to him at the city editor and e-mail caddress@philippine-quirer.com.ph.

Gov't mum on biting New York Times editorial

Coming up A2

for her government."

"The Philippines, after all, faces a number of terrorist groups on its own territory and millions of its citizens work overseas. It is never a wise for any government to be blackmailed by terrorists into abandoning its policies, but it seems especially ill-advised for Manila to be doing so," the newspaper said.

Unlike other countries

The New York Times compared Ms Arroyo's decision to withdraw to those of other countries that left Iraq on their own terms.

It said: "Spain and some Latin American countries had every right to exercise their sovereign judgment [but] it was best to leave Iraq. But their decisions, unlike President Arroyo's, were not driven by terrorist demands."

The New York Times noted that leaders of the United States, South Korea and Bulgaria went through "unyielding helplessness" when their citizens taken hostage in Iraq were beheaded as a result of their refusal to succumb to the kidnappers' demands.

"But President Arroyo—derided herself into thinking she could actually do something about the situation, and has now allowed the kidnappers to alter Filipino policy. One can understand the desire to save a life, but Manila's retreat will only place all other foreign nationals in Iraq in greater peril," the newspaper said.

It added: "We are not arguing that allies show blind loyalty to the Bush administration. If anything, President Arroyo's successor shows the perils of assembling a coalition of weak allies eager to please Washington but lacking much conviction in the American cause."

It also said Ms Arroyo was "certainly not helping the Iraqi people with her decision."

In a July 15 report on the hostage crisis, the newspaper said Ms Arroyo was forced to give in to the kidnappers' demands because "the risk of disappointing Washington, her most important ally, was easily outweighed by the perceived political retaliation that could have imperiled [her] political and economic agenda for the next six years." GS Cabacungan Jr

CHILDREN of OFWs mourn a rally to support the campaign to save the life of one of their own and to pull out Filipino troops from Iraq. They march to the Peace Bell in Quezon City early Tuesday to press their point. JOAN BONDOC

THE HAPPY ending is near, and there's something in the air sweeping Buenavista off its feet. EDWIN BACASMAS

17 days of terror

Coming up A2

July 11. The kidnappers say they want a sign of Philippine commitment and all its troops must be out by July 20 before De la Cruz is released. After Cabinet meeting, the Philippines says it is sticking to its Aug. 20 schedule of pullout. Sec. Soriano and De la Cruz's wife, Arsenia, leave for Amman, Jordan.

July 12. The kidnappers extend deadline by three hours and say De la Cruz has been moved to a place of execution. Washington says US Secretary of State Colin Powell has called up Ms Arroyo to reassure this is not worrying.

July 13. A Philippine official is quoted as saying GF troops to be withdrawn "as soon as possible." Manila imposes news blackout. Washington seeks explanation and expresses disappointment.

July 14. Manila says it is coordinating the pullout of its forces and the head count of its contingent is already down from 51 to 43. Australia says the size of the Coalition of the Willing in Iraq will "pay the price" if the Philippines withdraws.

July 15. De la Cruz, in new video, tells his family he will be home soon. The kidnappers say he will be released when the last Filipino peacekeeper is gone by end of July, and another deadline imposed.

July 16. Manila says 11 more peacekeepers are heading home, headed by the leader of the contingent.

July 17. A Philippine diplomat says Cabinet members are urging Ms Arroyo to withdraw the entire contingent before her State of the Nation Address in Congress on July 26. De la Cruz's wife, Arsenia, tells labor officials: "It's over. We're going home."

July 18. Foreign Secretary Delia Albert says the remaining members of Philippine contingent will pay a farewell call on Monday on their Polish commander before leaving for Kuwait, signifying a complete pullout of Philippine troops from Iraq.

July 19. The Philippine flag flying over Camp Ur in Hillah, south of Baghdad, since last Mar year is lowered for the last time. With farewell notes and double-up signs, the last 54 Filipino troops leave Iraq, completing the pullout of the Philippine humanitarian force.

July 20. Kidnappers free De la Cruz in Baghdad.

GMA tax bills face rough sailing, says Joker

By TJ Burgonio

[illegible] proposals [illegible] Malacañang, [illegible] President Macapagal-Arroyo will present to Congress in her State of the Nation Address next week, will face rough sailing in Congress, administration Sen. Jinggoy Estrada warned yesterday.

The government is asking Congress to pass the revenue measures to address the looming fiscal crisis. They include the imposition of excise tax on alcohol and tobacco products, the grant of general tax amnesty, and an increase in the value-added tax rate.

Estrada said it would be "short sighted" for Congress to pass the tax measures as the Bureau of Internal Revenue and Bureau of Customs have so far failed to show efficiency in collecting taxes.

"Before Congress even considers her new tax proposals the President should ask our revenue-raising agencies to increase their tax collection rate a six-month period by 10 percent," Estrada said in a statement.

"If they cannot, why entrust them with new tax laws to play around with but cannot collect effectively?" he said.

Arroyo said that the new tax proposals were bound to fail unless the present inefficiency system of tax collection was rectified.

"The problem is the system. Unless you correct the system, all measures are bound to fail," he said in a phone interview.

Gov't needs P274M more a day to solve deficit—Andaya

THE GOVERNMENT needs to raise P274 million a day—or approximately P100 billion a year—if it intends to meet the growing fiscal deficit resulting from the country's ballooning financial debt, according to Rep. Rolando Andaya.

Speaking at the Eggbun sa Manila Hotel, Andaya warned that the country's annual debt servicing, measured by the government's proposed budget for the National Power Corporation's debt of almost P400 billion, is likely to worsen the country's financial situation.

Andaya said while the economy witnessed a reduction in the budget gap in 2003 following improved revenue collection and collective spending, the country still needs an additional P100 billion a year in revenue collection for the next five years for the country to have a balanced budget by 2009.

"We need to raise our revenue collection by P100 billion every year, or approximately P274 million a day for us to achieve a balanced budget by 2009," Andaya said.

"Rationalizing and Congress should also review the country's tax system and enact all-out efforts to improve revenue collection even before impending new tax measures. Now is the time for us to shoulder these responsibilities," he added.

Andaya, chair of the House committee on appropriations during the 12th Congress, urged the Department of Finance to boost efforts in increasing the government's revenue take.

He said that new taxes, or adjustment in existing tax measures are definitely needed given our situation. But even the projected revenues from the tax measures being floated will not be enough.

Pagcor to come under finance dep't

THE PHILIPPINE Amusement and Gaming Corp. is to be placed under the finance department, a move aimed at closely supervising the state gaming firm's financial operations to pump in its fair with government efforts to solve the country's fiscal problems.

According to Finance Secretary Juanita Amatong, Malacañang will issue an executive order transferring supervision over Pagcor from the Office of the President to the Department of Finance.

She said the OP cannot fully oversee the state firm's operations as it is handling too many tasks.

Michaela Ramos

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

WEDNESDAY, JULY 21, 2004

ENTERTAINMENT

Good drama can affect history, says Ashley Judd

DO SOAPS work? They do when done properly, says Goddess Bangkok.

By Frank Cimatu
PDI Entertainment Editor

BANGKOK—Should Filipinos still adore "Maricel" if the television mermaid continued to betray women and HIV? Would more Filipinos donate more condoms if the life of Sarah Jane Salazar, the AIDS poster girl of the 1990s, a character in "Marimata Mo Kuya"?

Hollywood actress and activist Ashley Judd said soap operas are effective in spreading the message of HIV and reproductive health all over the world.

"The power of good drama to move people also means they can convey information that can change the course of history," said Judd in her talk, "Do Soap Operas Work?" last Wednesday at the 15th International AIDS Conference here.

Judd cited studies that said almost three-fourths of people in the United States, particularly adolescents, turn to mass media for knowledge about AIDS.

"They don't talk to their families about these issues," she said.

She said that from Cambodia to Brazil to South Africa, dramatic TV and radio programs and telenovelas bring about social and behavioral change "as long as they are done properly."

Even the Philippines is taking note.

Dr. Dominic Garcia, project manager of the AIDS Society of the Philippines, said the group would soon unveil a one-hour TV drama about a mature woman to relate with her female office contacting HIV.

Actor Bridget Pascual (of "Initial" fame) plays the woman while Hero Bautista plays her ex.

Garcia said his group has been conducting workshops for screenwriters to incorporate AIDS issues in their episodes.

Ryan Cayabyab, the director of the still unaired TV movie, is part of the workshops.

Actor Joel Torre played a tycoon with HIV/AIDS (WOW!) in the local soap "Mariposa Sa," starring Pops Fernandez.

Judd said soap operas are effective because of three things: identification, involvement and personal interaction.

"Maybe it's the melodrama—we just viewers found satisfaction in their lives in soap operas," said Judd. "They are personally relevant to the viewers, reflect reality (knowledge with the characters over time. People come to me and tell me, 'I feel like I know you.'"

People identify with her because of her roles in such movies as "Double Jeopardy," "Divine Secrets of Ya-Ya Sisterhood" and "Frida." In the last movie, she played Tina Modotti, a real-life photographer and activist like Judd herself.

"I myself ask (do I know tragic) from Mexico's all my life and for more events like my life's complicated," Judd said.

Before the actress gave her talk, the 24-minute Cambodian television spot "Punishment of Love" was shown. The drama was about a female office worker who took her boss for her lover while having a boyfriend on the side. She contracted HIV and infected her boyfriend.

The soap opera provided for knowledge and understanding. It was produced by the Population Services Institute and was reportedly shown on prime time.

Because it was about sand "deviant of Cambodian girls," as one doctor-viewer said, it was a hit in Cambodia.

Other soap operas with AIDS themes shown in the 2004 AIDS film festival were Hong Kong's "Love Under the Sun," Zambia's "Let's Talk About It . . . Harriet" and Cambodia's "Man in the Mirror."

"Love Under the Sun" is a second cut to a Chinese language "Let's Talk About It" is the story of an HIV-positive woman and how she was over the stigma raised by the television.

"Man in the Mirror" is about a soldier who went home because he was infected with HIV but became a hero in his village when he fought a sex-trafficking gang.

Wanted: Director for Cruise's 'MI-3'

ON BOARD. Agent Ethan Hunt

LOS ANGELES—Superstar Tom Cruise is looking for a new director for "Mission Impossible 3" after Joe Carnahan walked off the project before filming began, the entertainment press said Monday.

Industry title Daily Variety said Filmmaker Carnahan quit the high-octane sequel, which Cruise is producing as well as starring in, over "creative differences," just over a month before shooting was to begin.

But Carnahan's departure from high-octane sequel wasn't until just before the shooting schedule of the film in its planned June 23, 2005 release date, according to the entertainment daily.

Cruise and co-producer Paula Wagner are reviewing a list of about half a dozen candidates who could replace Carnahan as director and were expected to announce the successor soon.

Carnahan signed on to direct "MI-3" for Cruise, Wagner and Paramount Pictures in early 2004 after his 2002 success with the police thriller movie "Narc" starring Jason Patric and Ray Liotta.

"MI-3" has suffered several setbacks since pre-production began, with no first director David Fincher pulling out to make "Lords of Dogtown," while a series of writers have already come and gone from the project.

The movie is set to begin filming in the fall of the end of August, a spokesperson for the budding studio said as the buzz was rippled, adding that the exact location for the start of filming had yet to be decided.

But Cruise and his new fiancée are prominent in film in Berlin's the Hamburg, the latest star of Germany's producers, although there will are be able to film inside the building.

The first movie in the series, directed by Brian de Palma in 1996, grossed $454 million worldwide. The sequel, directed by John Woo, took $536 million in earnings in 2000 where. AFP

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER WEDNESDAY, JULY 21, 2004

APAYAO CLASH

CPLA accuses Army unit of coddling illegal loggers

By Yoki Conrares

THE CORDILLERA People's Liberation Army (CPLA), a rebel group that had forged peace with the government in 1986, showed its old combative fists yesterday as it accused a military unit of protecting illegal loggers in its ancestral land.

The CPLA leaders wondered aloud why their secret of illegal loggers in Apayao on July 10 provoked the Army's 17th Infantry Battalion into rushing to the scene from its base in neighboring Cagayan.

The incident led to a seven-hour gun battle that left two civilians dead and several others wounded, CPLA chief of staff Miguel Siggayao Jr. said at a press conference in Quezon City.

First serious encounter

It was the "first" serious encounter between a group of CPLA members and government troops since a truce was reached 18 years ago, according to CPLA deputy chair Alvino Aydiwan.

"We are concerned because we don't know whose side will lead us," said Aydiwan, adding that the military merely supported the incident later as an encounter with members of the New People's Army, the armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines.

Founded by the late Conrado Balweg, a renegade Catholic priest and former NPA guerrilla, the CPLA reached a strength of 3,000 combatants. With its supposed "integration" with the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) far from complete, the group now has about 2,000 active members, Aydiwan said.

7-hour gunfight

The gunfight lasted seven hours from 6 a.m. to 1 p.m. in Pudtol, a mountainous area in the Cordillera Autonomous Region (CAR), where a CPLA squad apprehended "over 300 trucks" that were about to ship out hot logs, the two officials revealed.

The soldiers arrived as the CPLA men were "interviewing" the haulers, said "in short order food upon the small CPLA unit and assembled workers," Siggayao said.

"A question has to be raised about the presence in Apayao of the 17th IB, which is based in the neighboring Cagayan," said Siggayao, noting that another Army unit, the 77th IB, has jurisdiction over the same area.

Operator or protector?

"Is the 17th IB involved as the operator or as a protector of the illegal logging operations?" he asked.

Nothing has been heard of the trucks and logs after the CPLA's withdrawal from the battle site, according to Siggayao.

The CPLA is authorized to patrol the area under the terms of its Sept. 13, 1986 ceasefire agreement with the AFP, Aydiwan said.

He said the CPLA pursuit of the illegal loggers on July 14 was spurred by reports (Top Choice Users commend) environment to CAR, including the Church, to stop illegal logging in Apayao.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Wednesday, July 21, 2004
Saint Lawrence of Brindisi, Priest
1st Reading: Jer 1:1, 4-10
Gospel: Mt 13:1-9

Jesus left the house and sat down by the lakeside. As many people gathered around him, he got in a boat. There he sat while the whole crowd stood on the shore, and he spoke to them in parables about many things.

Jesus said, "The sower went out to sow and, as he sowed, some seeds fell along the path and the birds came and ate them up. Other seeds fell on rocky ground where there was little soil, and the seeds sprouted quickly because the soil was not deep. But as soon the sun rose the plants were scorched and withered because they had no roots. Again other seeds fell among thistles, and the thistles grew and choked the plants. Still other seeds fell on good soil and produced a crop: some produced a hundredfold, others sixty and others thirty. If you have ears, then hear."

Commentary

The word of God is lucid in itself but we have the ability to make it fruitless. Here is the timeless question of the interplay of grace and freewill (see July 11). Theologians And many others battle over it in past centuries. Once it becomes an abstract question it has no central any more, and the debate can go on forever. It was never settled in fact. But of course when you bring it back to the personal sphere it is a very pointed question, and it is asked every moment of our daily lives. It becomes the question, "How is my heart today?" Let's expand this images in today's reading.

Is my heart just a public path with so many coming to call, nowhere to "inhabit"? Do not a favorite word in John's gospel. Am I full of restless activity, so that I never really see anyone or hear anything? Am I constantly "entertaining," so that I can never hear what others are trying to tell me?

Or is that heart of mine a hard stony place? Am I afraid of anyone who comes near me, in case they make demands I don't want? Am I picking my teeth and covering up some very painful thing in my life? Am I shaded by the deception of modern life? Can I sit without turning on the TV or picking up something to read? Is my life a series of distractions, which we violate no direction, no passion? That list covers everyone. I think! Our job now is to find good soil in the heart, where the seeds of the Gospel can grow.

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Anti-AIDS drive in AFP, PNP urged

By Blanche S. Rivera

THOSE members of the Armed Forces have been infected with the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), according to the country's registry of confirmed cases, and nine more are considered cases.

Because of this, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) yesterday urged the government to beef up its education campaign on the virus...which causes acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS)—among confirmed personnel, which has been identified as a "vulnerable sector" in the Philippines.

UNAIDS country director for the Philippines Mr. Gious Ateneo said that the nervous Filipino workers, which account for 32 percent of all cases, the police and military were at a risk of acquiring the virus because of the nature of their jobs.

Three uniform men were included in the HIV/AIDS registry in the late 1990s but their identities, health and employment status, and even specific reasons confidential. They were classified simply as "self-reported cases."

"This is alarming not just in the UNAIDS but to everyone, specifically to the government," Ateneo said in an interview at the HIV/AIDS Center in Manila yesterday.

"If you have three confirmed cases, then that means there are many more unreported cases," she said. This was one reason the UNAIDS had been encouraging HIV/AIDS education for the Philippine National Police and the Armed Forces of the Philippines since 1996.

For every one confirmed HIV/AIDS case, there are three unconfirmed cases, the Department of Health said, adopting the equation used by the World Health Organization.

The WORLD

Editor Lorenzo B. Gloco

Freed Egyptian says he was treated well

BAGHDAD—An Egyptian truck driver held hostage for two weeks was freed by insurgents Monday, saying he was treated well and asking his family to forgive him for worrying them.

Hospital Mohammed Alsayed Algamlawi was reported captured July 6 when a group calling itself the Iraqi Legitimate Resistance released a video showing him surrounded by masked gunmen.

He was brought into the Egyptian Embassy Monday evening, witnesses said.

Algamlawi said he was treated in "an Islamic manner, 100 percent," fed well and allowed to pray. He said his captors were members of the Iraqi resistance and did not include any foreign fighters.

Algamlawi's family exploded in celebration on hearing of his release. His wife, Laila, ululated. "We are partying downstairs," his son of Gemaah was flowers and when reached by telephone in their home in the Nile Delta town of Zagazig, 60 km northeast of Cairo.

Algamlawi's wife said she had spoken to her husband soon after his release.

He said only "Thank God and I am coming home. God willing," she said. "Thank God. Thank God."

The family said it did not know when Algamlawi would be coming home, but planned to slaughter a lamb or cow in celebration when he did.

The Egyptian, who gave detailed directions to his home in Zagazig during an interview, said his captors were "sending a message to any Arab driver who comes to Iraq."

Algamlawi stressed that he had not been bringing cargo for US forces here, as the militants said he was.

"It's sending (this) message, and sending regards... that I was hauling for the Americans. I was hauling diesel from the mid-Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and was headed to Iraq to offload at storage terminals in Ladhiya, for use by the Americans," he told Associated Press Television Network. "He did not know Americans with us. I didn't even see Americans. The security who was with me was Iraq, 100 percent."

Algamlawi told Egypt's Middle East News Agency that for the first few days he was kept blindfolded, with his hands bound, and that he was moved around every few days.

"The threats, like the pushing,... and the coming of weapons, was during the first days," he told MENA. AP

ALGAMLAWY, right, an Egyptian truck driver who was held hostage for two weeks, is greeted by a senior official Counsellor Mohamed Mamdouh Kesh, at the Egyptian Embassy in Baghdad.

Arafat acts to defuse leadership crisis

GAZA—Stumbling to defuse a Palestinian leadership crisis, President Yasser Arafat ordered a new security chief on Monday over the head of a cousin whose appointment led to a weekend of violence by gunmen protesting at corruption.

But Prime Minister Ahmed Qurie kept the door on Arafat by warning he would not name by his resignation, rendered in frustration over what he called an explosion of "chaos and lawlessness" that he has been powerless to stop.

Arafat, 75, is facing the stiffest challenges to his leadership since Palestinians received a measure of self-rule three hated a decade ago. Some fear it could overwhelm his efforts into civil war.

The confrontation is also widely seen as a power struggle between Arafat's old guard and younger rivals ranging out for Jordan Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon carries out a plan to remove Jewish settlements from Gaza by the end of 2005.

Arafat, under public pressure to overhaul his security apparatus, named Abdel Razek al-Majaida to be the new post of overall security director for the West Bank and Gaza.

He would outrank Moussa Arafat, the cousin widely seen as a symbol of entrenched cronyism, officials said.

The reinstatement of Mohammed Dahlan, a veteran commander who resigned earlier this month as Arafat's request, was greeted by supporters firing automatic weapons in the air.

Gunmen opposed to Moussa Arafat, appointed security chief in the Gaza Strip on Saturday, had battled security forces there on Sunday in clashes that left 10 people wounded.

Under the new arrangement, Moussa Arafat will retain a senior security post in Gaza.

Compounding Arafat's woes was Qurie's decision on Saturday to submit his resignation after hard distinctions on Friday of four French aid workers, a police chief and another official in Gaza. Arafat rejected Qurie's resignation on Sunday.

After a Cabinet meeting on Monday, Qurie said his resignation would stand pending a written response from Arafat but added such ministerial crises against him quitting, signaling he could still remain.

He made clear his final decision could depend on Arafat's willingness to cede executive powers. "It's about time to refer to our security forces," Qurie said.

A moderate traditionally close to Arafat, Qurie has failed to get the president to enact security reforms demanded by international mediators as a condition for a "road map" peace plan promoting Palestinian statehood. Reuters

Iraq warns countries supporting rebels

DUBAI—Iraq is ready to retaliate against countries it accuses of supporting violence wracking the country, the country's defense minister warned on Tuesday.

Hazim al-Shaalan mentioned no countries by name but accused the four days' guerrilla fighters visited by the country from Syria.

"We are prepared to move the arena of the attacks on Iraq's borders and its region to those countries," he was quoted as saying by the London-based Asharq al-Awsat newspaper.

"We've spoken to them and confronted them with facts and evidence, but some of them have taken any action to stop supporting terrorism in Iraq," he said.

Iraq blames a wave of bombings and assassinations, which has claimed hundreds of lives including senior Iraqi politicians, on remnants of Saddam Hussein's regime as well as foreign Islamic militants who have entered from neighboring countries.

"They (Iraqis) confess to the presence of their spies in Iraq who have a mission to shake up the social and political situation," the defense minister said.

"Iranian terrorism has been rare and unprecedented since the establishment of the Iraqi state.

Washington, too, has accused Tehran of seeking to destabilize and gain influence in Iraq, which like Iran, is predominantly Shi'ite Muslim. Tehran denies interfering in Iraqi affairs.

Ousted Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein waged a protracted war against Iran between 1980 and 1988 in which hundreds of thousands died on both sides.

Iraqi Prime Minister Iyad Allawi—on a tour of Arab states hardening Iraq—says Jordanian support for his drive to crush insurgents.

They've agreed earlier this month to help and to long desert border with Iraq and snap foreign Islamists infiltrating into Iraq to fight US forces and the US-backed authorities. Reuters

Myth of Iraq's premier as ruthless leader showcases nation in turmoil

BAGHDAD—If premier Iyad Allawi's plan for his enemies and fought off threats against his life. Capital punishment will be back, he says, and rumors flying around the streets have him personally shooting terrorists as cold blood.

In Iraqi hunting from months of violence and chaos, interim Prime Minister Iyad Allawi has developed the makings of a perhaps fictional, leader. Surprisingly, that image has endeared him to many Iraqis, accustomed to strongman rule.

"I loved that he gave to talk to kill criminals," said Salma Abbas, a 30-year-old government employee. "This is good, we want someone as strong as Saddam."

A secular Muslim Shiite with CIA links and ties to Saddam Hussein's Baath Party in the 1970s, Allawi had been a member of the mass detainee Governing Council, but was not widely known here when he became interim leader of the country June 28.

His bloody public image has been lifted over the past three weeks, in

ALLAWY

assassination drumbeat wages.

One persistent rumor has him killing as many as six blindfolded and handcuffed terror suspects held at a Baghdad police station just days before taking power.

When asked about it at a news conference last week, Allawi let out a hearty laugh and replied in the only a "big lie."

"It's a statement by men enemies, we definitely would not use the same tactics that Saddam has used, and we are, all of us, myself, as well as my government, for saving lives (here and in) him."

Other stories making the rounds vary slightly in their details, but the message is the same: Allawi, a 59-year-old British-educated physician-turned politician, is a ruthless man willing to resort to horrifying brutality to restore security in Iraq.

One rumor has him visiting his jail wards of Baghdad and asking the local police chief to line up terror suspects. Allawi takes out a pistol and walks down the line shooting them one after the other.

Another has Allawi, who opposed Saddam from exile abroad for 30 years, at the police stations of the Baghdad district of Kadhimiyah, Governor criminals are brought out. "You were criminals under Saddam and you are criminals now. You don't deserve to live," he yells, before shooting them, eyewitnesses say.

"The security situation requires such actions from the prime minister," said gas station manager Sabine al-Yasseri, who called the rumor "unconfirmed."

Those attitudes may be difficult to fathom—given that Iraqis have suffered terrible injustices under Saddam—but they reflect people's impatience with the violence that has been fast swirling in several lives for more than a year.

They also point out the qualities Iraqis respect in a leader and the distance the country has to travel before it fully embraces human rights and democratic values.

"Iyad Allawi must hire and give the impression that he too can be Saddam," said Heba'a al-Mandeel, a geography student at Baghdad's Mustansiriyah University. "He is telling every one that he can be as tough as Saddam. It's giving Iraqis hope."

Iraqis are divided on whether the rumors benefit Allawi, a heavy, or could work to his disadvantage. Some say they show that one Saddam has been replaced by another. Others say they feel Iraqi love-hate relationship with its dictator. AP

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26 July (Mon)	Update on Legal Ethics	Three (3.0) Units	CSJA Director R. Agpalo
(PM)	Update on Criminal Law	Three* (3.0) Units	Justice Mariano C. Agcaoili
27 July (Tue)	Update on Labor Law	Three (3.0) Units	Dean Antonio K. Abad, Jr.
(PM)	Practical Law Firm Skills	Four (4.0) Units	Justice Lucas P. Bersamin
28 July (Wed)	Recent Developments in Taxation (BIR Law Practitioner Program)	Three (3.0) Units	Prof. Ramon L. Concepcion
(PM)	a) Developments in ADR b) International Arbitration	Two* (2.0) Units Three (1.5 hrs.)	Prof. Alfredo F. Tadiar Dean Custodio O. Parlade
29 July (Thu)	Philippine Update in Legal Ethics	Three (3.0) Units	Justice Josue N. Bellosillo
(PM)	a) International Law b) Corporate Governance	Two* (2.0) Units Three (1.5 hrs.)	Prof. Merlin M. Magallona Atty. Francisco B. Ortigas, Jr.
30 July (Fri)	Environmental Law Update (MCLE Practitioner Program)	Three (3.0) Units	Prof. Marvic M.V.F. Leonen
(PM)	Legal Writing and Oral Advocacy	Four (4.0) Units	Justice Hugo E. Gutierrez, Jr.

WORLDBRIEFS

Antiterror patrols of Malacca Straits

ADDED THE U.S.-U.K. DIMENSION PLUS—Government naval vessels from the region's Indonesian and Malaysia observed into the Malacca Straits on Tuesday to begin their first coordinated patrols aimed at deterring terrorists and piracy in the East Asia's maritime lifeline. The unprecedented move by the three countries short before the straits were to protect the vital, 3000-km shipping lane from a "9-11 at sea." Officials fear terrorists could attack vessels to harm per global trade, or use a ship as a floating bomb to devastate a port. Some 50,000 ships pass the straits each year, carrying oil from the Middle East, and goods bound for Europe through the narrow passage between peninsula Malaysia and Singapore on one side and the Indonesian island of Sumatra on the other. Indonesia's contribution seven vessels for Tuesday's non-threatened patrol while Malaysia and Singapore sent five each. AP

France, Israel row escalates

PARIS—France told Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon on Monday it will not set a date for him to visit Paris until he explains comments ringing French jews to emigrate to Israel to escape "the wicked anti-Semitism," a spokesperson for President Jacques Chirac signaled that a long-standing invitation for Sharon to visit France is now on hold until the Israeli leader explains remarks that have outraged politicians and Jewish groups in France. Israeli officials responded by saying it was unclear if Sharon would accept the invitation, made on Thursday in a speech to Jewish leaders visiting Jerusalem. In addition he also praised France's efforts to fight anti-Semitism. "Following Mr. Sharon's declarations, France has called for explanations," the spokesperson said. "If Israel understands that a possible visit by the Israeli prime minister to Paris, for which no date has been set, will be under-stood only when the explanations called for have been provided." Reuters

Clinton adviser probed on terror memos

WASHINGTON—Sandy Berger, former President Bill Clinton's national security adviser, is under criminal investigation by the justice department after highly classified terrorism documents disappeared under his care reviewing other documents turned over to the Sept. 11 commission. Berger's home and office were searched earlier this year by FBI agents armed with one week after the former Clinton adviser accidentally removed some sensitive documents to the National Archives and admitted he also removed handwritten notes he had made while reviewing the sensitive documents. AP

Blast kills 25 in Ukrainian coal mine

MOSCOW—An explosion ripped through a Ukrainian coal mine, killing at least 25 miners and trapping 11 more in a blazing pit in the country's biggest mining tragedy in five years, the emergency ministry said on Tuesday.

Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovich, former governor of Ukraine's coal-producing Donetsk region and a major contender in a forthcoming presidential election, was due to visit the pit later in the day.

The accident at the Zasyadko coal mine, 28 km west of Donetsk, was the latest in a long series of tragedies plaguing the industry. Some 268 miners died last year in Ukraine.

"Twenty-five people are dead. Their bodies are lying in the underground mine. Searchers are still looking for 11 underminers," said a duty officer at the emergency ministry.

A ministry official in Donetsk said more than 50 rescue teams had responded soon after temperatures in the pit soared to 1,200 degrees Celsius.

Zasyadko mine, built almost 50 years ago, is one of Ukraine's most productive mines, but has been struck by deadly accidents. In January 2003, nine miners were killed, with four more dying in the following two years.

Forty-eight miners were working when the methane explosion occurred late on Monday nearly a kilometre below ground in the heartland of the Donbass coalfield. Twelve managed to escape.

Ukraine's accident rate, the worst in Europe, a Moscow-style cadre system, lack of funds and shoddy safety conditions.

Miners' wrath is small, dying scores up to 1,200 miners below the surface. Drivers are rife of miners scrapping shelling around methane detectors to double them as safety inspectors more interested in your bit (unprovoked) communities with no alternative employment.

Presidential elections Prime Minister Leonid Kuchma's choice to take over from him at the October election, has promised to pay nine wage arrears and other benefits to miners. Reuters

Sudan jails 10 militants

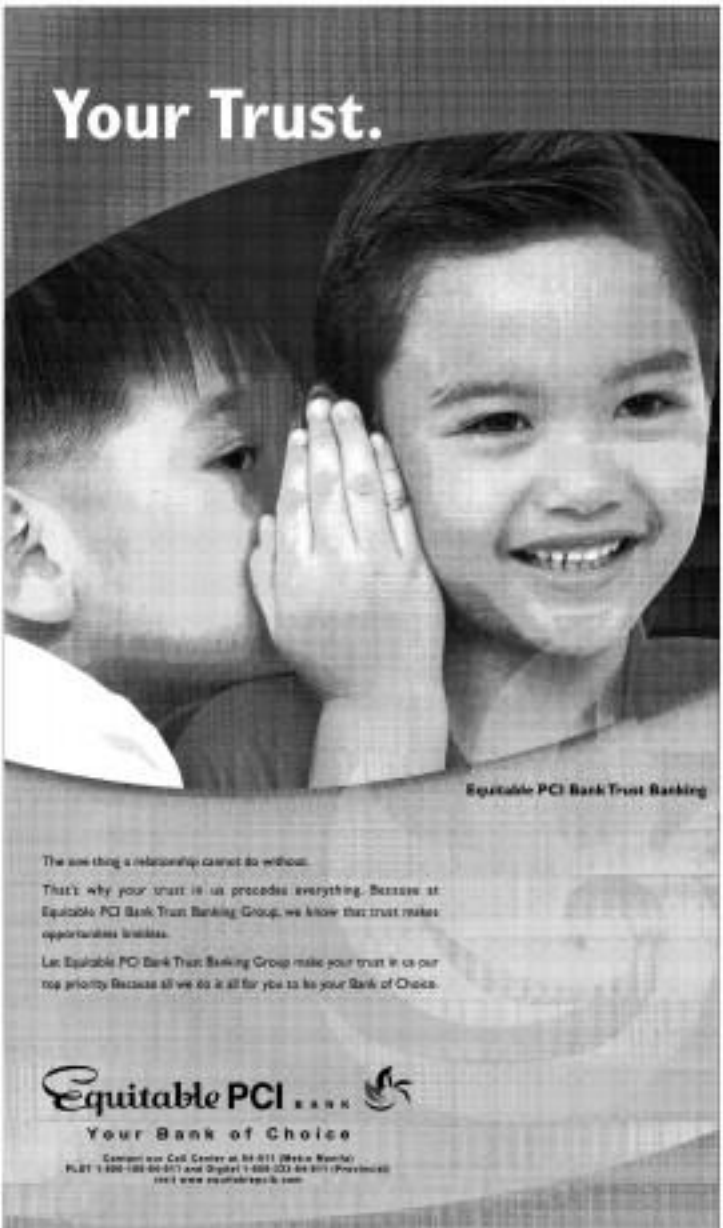
KHARTOUM—A Sudanese court has sentenced 10 Arab militiamen to imprisonment and six years in jail to the first conviction of international militia fighters for looting and killing in the Darfur region.

The ruling by a court in Nyala in Darfur, seven by firearms, and the first conviction of Janjaweed members for their role in the conflict.

Judge Abdelaziz Ibrahim Ahmed read a sentence of 10 years, seven suspended, for attempted arms and a fine of one million Sudanese pounds ($384) each to 10 individuals from the Janjaweed militias who are accused of massacring the conflict in Darfur," the ruling said.

A civil organization is normally the ruling off of one hand and a fine on the opposite side of the body although the ruling did not spell out exact details.

Official Unrest-hatred talks to find a political solution to the conflict collapsed in Abuja on Saturday as the rebels walked out, demanding security conditions including disarming the Janjaweed and allowing access into grounds Reuters



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PEOPLE at WORK

Editor Raul G. Marcelo
Subeditor/Editor Regina Galang Reyes

Dim sum is his insurance for a successful life

By Cecile G. Garcia

CAREER TALES

WHEN it's true that there aren't a lot of Filipinos who've been married, fathered a child, divorced, remarried, had another child, and gotten better known for his first than second business, Manny Ko is the exception.

Manny is founder and president of Rockwell Land Corporation, owner of Dim Sen, the popular food chain noted for its delicious dim sum, He has been in insurance for over 20 years and is president of his own insurance brokerage firm, Manila Bankers Insurance Corporation (MBIC).

To a great extent, his experience in insurance may have inadvertently honed Manny's entrepreneurial skills, and may have also laid the groundwork for his success as an entrepreneur.

Insurance background

Chronologically, Dim Sen came first... it was founded in 1993. But, though MBIC came much later, for Manny, it was the culmination of a lifelong career. He says, "I put up MBIC 13 years ago, following my resignation from Universal Reinsurance Corporation. I chose to retire early because I felt the company had changed." Manny was connected with Universal Reinsurance, a member of the Ayala Insurance Group, from 1971 to 1993, serving as administration assistant, assistant manager, manager, assistant vice president and finally vice president for domestic market, a position he held until he left the company in 1993.

"My foreign friends helped me organize MBIC," recalls Manny. "I'm proud to say that it's one of the most respected on the field today." As brokers, they act as intermediary between insurance companies and companies that are looking for insurance coverage. "MBIC has its own niche," adds Manny, who, incidentally, married his cousin in insurance as a junior clerk at the FGU Insurance Group, another Ayala subsidiary. He was also a fourth year college student at the De La Salle University (DLSU), where he obtained a degree in commerce. "I stayed with FGU after graduation and rose to become assistant chief of the company's bonds department. My big break came when I was assigned to Universal Reinsurance."

Commitment to values

Employed for 13 years with Ayala, Manny says he stayed because he liked the culture and the values the company upheld. "I try to introduce the same values in my own company." These were also the excitement of meeting people and the opportunity for travel. Occasionally he was sent abroad for training and observation tours.

Insurance is a gentleman's game, contends Manny. "Total commitment is basic and its main challenge for me was earning the trust and confidence of clients and being able to serve their needs." Perhaps the most important thing he learned in insurance was professionalism. At the same time, he discovered the value of honesty in business relations.

Dim Sen, where anyone and almost every people have come to love, was established 21 years ago. Recalls its founder, "It all started when my wife and I were offered a small store space in El Pueblo [in Ortigas]. Times were hard and we needed the extra income. But, we didn't know what to sell."

MANNY KO

Continued on page 2

Continued on page 2

Cake designing is sweetest job for sisters

By Candy G. Villanueva

DO YOU have a sweet tooth? Does the bright summer sunshine inspire you to decorate an orange chiffon cake with delicate daisies and cheery sunflowers? Do you have an eye for detail, precision and beauty? If your answer is yes to all of the above, then you just may have what it takes to be a cake designer like Marie Gregorio.

Marie Gregorio is one of the country's top cake designers. Cake designers are responsible for making our weddings, baptisms, birthdays and countless other special events actually look like it. Intricately detailed designs, luscious flavors and a touch of love.

More than just cake

With her sister Candy Sanchez, Gregorio set up Cake Garden. "We're more than just cake designers," she claims, aside from designing and baking masterpieces, they also do research, conceptualization, coordination and even delivery and set-up.

"I meet couples and discuss their dream cake, and try to get as much input regarding the cake of their dreams," says Gregorio. To help wedding couples realize their dreams, she gathers wedding details like reception venue, motif colors, theme and number of guests. "These are the same factors that will help me design a cake for them aside from the ideas they have in mind for their cake."

Some clients require unique designs, which call for research and careful planning. "I request for at least a week to allow for research and to come up with at least two sketches. My client helps me in the decision-making. Research and sketches are done after dinner over a cup of coffee, after, there are no telephone calls to disrupt our train of thought," Gregorio claims.

Aside from the actual execution of the baking and decorating, Gregorio also does most of the deliveries. "This is a commitment I give to my clients." This is because some finishing touches are done on the site. This also gives her an opportunity to make sure that the flowers and cake table are up compliment the atmosphere of the event.

Creative concepts

Cake designing is a creative job that requires going beyond the traditional. "You have to think out of the box," advises Gregorio to those who would like to get ahead in the cake business. In designing an oriental-inspired cake for example, she does not limit the colors to traditional red and gold. We use pastel-like colors, like mint green, blue and lavender. Instead of using real, the used the color pink on the design.

Sometimes inspiration comes from the most unlikely places. When they're not surfing the net or sifting through magazines, there's is the inside scooping for fresh designs. "You will never know how a magazine page, like a recipe, can get you to do a cross-colored striped wedding cake," reveals Gregorio.

For another project, a "Bat Mitzvah" with embroidery from a tongue in Gwendolin because the inspiration for one of the designs of

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OPINION

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Vengeance

EDITORIAL

WHAT do Australian Prime Minister John Howard and American President George W. Bush have in common? They have criticized the Philippines for their criticism is based on policies increasingly rejected by their own people. Indeed, while he has not been vocal about the Philippines, one might add that British Prime Minister Tony Blair suffers from an increasing sense of political insecurity, along with the other leading figures of the Washington-Rome-Canberra Axis.

Winston Churchill in 1936 told an American newspaper in reference to the US entry into World War I: "America should have minded her own business and stayed out of the World War. If you hadn't entered the war, the Allies would have made peace with Germany in the spring of 1917. Had we made peace then there would have been no collapse in Russia followed by Communism, no breakdown in Italy followed by fascism, and Germany would not have signed the Versailles Treaty, which has enthroned Nazism in Germany. If America had stayed out of the war, all those 'isms' wouldn't exist; by sweeping the continent of Europe and banishing dozen parliamentary governments, and if England had made peace early in 1917, it would have saved over one million British, French, American and other lives."

We quote Churchill, steadfast American ally of World War II, to show that the unintended consequences of American meddling in Iraq has been the destruction of their efforts to contain terrorism. The Philippine pullout is not a betrayal of American policy. Rather, it is the latest fruit of American policy which has put its allies in a position where there is no contest between Filipino interests and those not of America, but of its leadership. The depth of the Bush administration's betrayal of even the aspirations of its ideological fathers has been demonstrated by the public condemnation of Bush by the historian Francis Fukuyama, who had helped pen the ideological manifesto for the Republican restoration of 2000.

There is a maxim in geopolitics which says that among nations, there are no permanent friends, only permanent interests. If we set aside the compelling interest of protecting our overseas workers wherever they may be, we need only refer to our country's experience as a loyal ally of America in World War II. Manuel Quezon in Corregidor exploited to frustration, "How typically American to order its people to go on the run at the first sign of danger, Europe, while a slaughter, the Philippines, is being roped in a bank robber." That statement by expression our experience during the war. It should not express our present condition in the crumbling new American world order.

All that the critics of the Philippine pullout from Iraq can herself are either the "betrayal" of the Coalition of the Willing or the dire prospects of American or Australian vengeance on our country. But the vengeance that the critics of the country should be fearing comes from a possible one at the hands of their own citizens. It is any surprise that an American administration that lost the popular vote, now talks of—get this—a "run-off" scenario for the United States, with a supposed terrorist hungry that threatens to disrupt the November elections?

In truth, the Philippine government has embraced its own people, something beyond the love of leaders such as Howard and Bush, and even Blair, who are famously contemptuous of public opinion at home. This is what happens when terrorism is fought with totalitarian methods: it results in a totalitarian contempt for public opinion. The problem, as Blair, Bush and Howard may eventually find out, is that they suffer from the myopia of dictators while still being subject to being turned out of office by their own people.

The Philippines can at least say that it was willing, as the Spaniards were willing, to pay the price of democracy. Which is: to listen to the people; to obey the injunctions that public office requires: listening to the public; and living up to the higher considerations that are supposed to motivate democracies.

A country that looks after its own, and which can turn its back on a policy proven to be based on the deception and fraud of allies, is a country much more qualified to engage in an honorable relationship with other nations.

Don't take advantage of Angelo de la Cruz

If things do not improve, truck driver Angelo de la Cruz will be released by his Iraqi captors and will go home soon—in a worse fate in the Philippines. He will be used as an exhibit at President Macapagal-Arroyo's State of the Nation Address before Congress to make political capital. Perhaps he could ask his captors not to release him before July 26.

He would be used like the three children from Pasong who were turned out as exhibits during a previous State by GMA with that rock-and-roll count about floating paper boats with a message in her dress the Pasig River from Boy-ato to Malacañang. That was pure harassing hatred to inflict up a dull speech and show that the President cares very much for the poor.

I feel for poor De la Cruz; the entire west situation. He has suffered enough. Don't make him suffer more.

Calling home the Filipino contingent from Iraq to save De la Cruz is political capital enough for GMA. She's not a credible president for it although she shouldn't overdo it by making him an exhibit. Let him go home quickly to his family.

* * *

Prices of practically everything are going up, from gasoline and diesel to transportation fares, foodstuff, government fees and road toll rates. Soon, taxes will be raised, too. That's how taxes from the elections are definitely done. The politicians don't need our votes anymore, so they couldn't care less about how we feel.

The biggest increase is in the toll fees—up to 400 percent more in the North Luzon Expressway (NLEX) under the contested toll rate plan. The per-kilometer rate is higher at the South Luzon Expressway (SLEX) but the jump was biggest at the NLEX because its rate had not been raised for many years. The last time fares increased a little because they almost caused a revolution by motorists. But it is only a matter of time before they are gradually raised to the original rate schedule. The developers have no choice. They have to pay back their huge loans.

Motorists will naturally howl because they have been used to the very low rates. But a study made by the University of the Philippines Planning Development and Research Foundation shows that motorists are actually getting a bargain.

In vehicle operating costs (VOC) alone, according to the study, motorists on operations of vehicles will generate savings of up to P7.44 per km, or P595.20 if they travel the whole 80 km of the NLEX, from Balintawak to Sta. Ines, Pampanga. (TOC is the cost per km consuming time + fixed cost + time cost. Fixed cost are items that are consumed while operating a vehicle—fuel, oil, brake fluid, etc. Fixed costs include the tires and tear on the vehicle's structure as well as other permanent parts. Time cost is the value of time lost motorist.)

According to computations made by the UP analysts, cars, jeepneys, pickups and vans using the new NLEX can expect to have savings of 95 centavos from vehicle operating costs for every kilometer traveled. Assuming that a car travels from end to end, a distance of 80 km, VOC savings will total P76.

Trucks will generate savings of P3.82 per km. A truck traveling the whole length of the NLEX will save P305.80.

Buses will generate savings of P7.44 per km, for the whole route, each bus will save P595.20.

That's according to the UP study.

And it's not all. Traffic will be more predictable and travel time will be reduced. Motorists can drive at an average speed of 80 km per hour, reducing travel time by almost half.

Best of all, because of improvements in the NLEX that established road deficit: 140 of every 1,000 traffic accidents are caused by road defects, there will be fewer road accidents.

On economic benefits, the UP study said there will be increased economic output of the major production centers of the Philippine economy because of reduction in transport costs within the regional import area of the NLEX. According to experts, for every percentage decrease in real transport rates, there will be a corresponding 1.91 percent increase in agricultural output, and a 2.07 percent increase in industrial output. Every kilometer of paved roads and bridges yields P30 million annually in gross value added, or in increased income for the economy.

The NLEX remains the most direct link of Bataan, Tarlac and Pampanga to Metro Manila. Almost all commercial passenger and cargo traffic from Northern and Central Luzon pass the road/bound. Long-haul bus services are still non-existent to the country. By air, connection is limited to a Manila-Clark commuter plane and helicopter connections, regular commercial flights (Manila-Baguio, Manila-Laoag, Manila-Tuguegarao) and chartered flights to Casiguran and Palanan, both in Isabela. By water, only the regular ferry service between Mamburao and Batangas, Batangas and Calapan, Batangas and Abra and the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority in Olongapo provide connections. By land, MacArthur Highway provides an alternative route, but it is very congested.

The NLEX is the first segment of 84 km of the expressway to widened the roads and create 110 lane km, three new interchanges, two flyovers, and a new toll barrier about 900 meters north of the existing toll plaza in Balintawak.

The NLEX's area of impact is the third most dynamic region in the country (after the National Capital Region and Southern Tagalog), which regularly ninth road network capacity problems. For better mobility of people, goods and services, hence higher economic activity and more jobs.

As of 2000, the NLEX's impact area has a population of 8 million, representing 10.5 percent of the country's population. It is growing at an average rate of 2.62 percent. The area is the second most densely populated, next to the NCR.

As I See It

Neal H. Cruz

I DON'T know why we should be so incensed by Joe Louis's remark. I myself thought it was funny when troops making a record in the 100-meter dash.

As the very least, we have to make allowances for differences in culture, like manners, or the accidents of birth, like little meaning in the Chinese Chinese. At least Joe used a line by the comedian Oscar Goldberg was recently dropped by Slim Bud so, in an ad campaign for making jokes about George W. Bush in a Democratic rally. I remember that Leno and David Letterman also made quips about him but it's done shortly after 9/11.

At the very least, we ourselves are to blame for what makes the joke hilarious. The hasty departure of our troops in such a stampede and with the humiliations with which Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, Bello Cohen and Angelo Reyes stressed her term while underscoring it in Iraq. Obviously the Islamic bring snatched the wrong hostage. At one point, they were more going be—than than Bush and Dick Cheney and Donald Rumsfeld.

I still remember being with Cohen at ABS-CBN in the wee hours of morning during the 1991 strike in Iraq, like how glowed as the TV screen showed fuzzy pictures of one of the greatest exits of all time in flames, hours of light streaking toward the sky in the night. In spite of military maneuvers and smart bombs and precision raids, we came in a mess at an exit more than 10 years later. And the pronoun "we" is reference to the people pursuing the campaign.

Remember that Baghdad featured women and children and that smart bombs had power to fly just to be not only smart but also dumb. Remember that our participation in the war could produce many consequences for our OFWs in the field left an even darker exit. It was terrible a hostage, and it could not have been nothing in more ways than one.

And how many persons of our troops dashing for the border, heads between their laps. It is funny. It would be hilarious if Cohen, Reyes and Mike Arroyo to represent GMA actually headed Operation Iraqi. They were the ones who sent the troops there in the first place. They were the ones who sent the troops there in the first place. They were the ones who sent the troops there in the first place.

Nor our pullout from Iraq offers lessons we cannot afford to ignore, lessons that could help us chart new and better directions in facing the world. The Oliveros have the right word for crisis and opportunity and therefore show that conjunction hold more than at this point. We may see chalk up De la Cruz as just another ordeal to charge to experience—after nothing is dry with a hasty farewell to this contentious hero, an unprecedented act mobilization and government putting itself in the back for a job well done.

There is one lesson we should particularly take to heart. It's time we buried "special relationship" as a shallow and unrealized game. The United States has its interests, we have our own, and we're the main shall meet. Not in those days when we have more than a million seek-ers in the Middle East. That is the official figure, but if we notice of a friend's paper I talked to more than twice that number. The actual number is probably more than. We have no business propping up their welfare by depriving some of their hosts or the bad guys in a Holy Crusade as end evil. Aiming a sex against one of their own is the name of loving them from their closet cops is playing fanatics to other with the OFWs' lives. The wonder is not that De la Cruz was kidnapped and threatened with beheading, the wonder is that they did not do it sooner.

More than that, we have no business jeopardizing the very basis of this country. As it is, our OFWs are being stiff competition from other countries that have made it a policy to upgrade their workers' skills while keeping their prices low. Our OFWs' dollar remittances are what's keeping this country afloat. It boggles the mind to think of what would happen to us if the Arabs decided to stop sending us their oil—not increasing the price but shutting off the spigot.

The NLEX remains the most direct link of Bataan, Tarlac and Pampanga to Metro Manila. Almost all commercial passenger and cargo traffic from Northern and Central Luzon pass the road/bound. Long-haul bus services are still non-existent to the country. By air, connection is limited to a Manila-Clark commuter plane and helicopter connections, regular commercial flights (Manila-Baguio, Manila-Laoag, Manila-Tuguegarao) and chartered flights to Casiguran and Palanan, both in Isabela. By water, only the regular ferry service between Mamburao and Batangas, Batangas and Calapan, Batangas and Abra and the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority in Olongapo provide connections. By land, MacArthur Highway provides an alternative route, but it is very congested.

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New directions

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

boundaries during their many months last year.

But our pullout from Iraq offers lessons we cannot afford to ignore, lessons that could help us chart new and better directions in facing the world. The Olivers have the right word for crisis and opportunity and therefore show that conjunction hold more than at this point. We may see chalk up De la Cruz as just another ordeal to charge to experience—after nothing is dry with a hasty farewell to this contentious hero, an unprecedented act mobilization and government putting itself in the back for a job well done.

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Then all the spouts met that we should pressure ourselves like arsenals before masters. Though it is a testament to our national perversion that we discover that principle when only being Arab countries but never the United States. What if it were the other way around, if we needed about the way we deal with the Gulf countries. Whether those countries be Jordan and South Arabia or Iraq and Iran. At least, we owe their respect, at least we owe them appreciation.

Of course, that is not to say that all pressures may take the place of justice. But necessity may obliterate mobility. Self preservation should be tempered with consistency, national interests should be founded on principle, but that brings us back to what were called the lesser and weaker of the virtues. What is more to the point was, stressed by the United Nations, the Pope and every decent person in the world. A war utterly lacking in principle, morality, justice. I agree what I said the other day: it is not enough to pull out of Iraq, which is the result of scientific and lack of spine. We should admit our mistake and apologize to the Iraqis for the harm we have done them. That should be the start of running a new but sad and going forward.

I guess it won't be easy. I remember that it took Willy Brandt to acknowledge the sins wrong about those Russians. The never apologized to her, in any case. But you never know. As the De la Cruz case shows, public vigilance, and pressure, can always do the trick.

US has bowed down to terrorists before

CNN, ABC and AIDS

COMMENTARY

René C. Pulliciano

9/11 diplomatic personnel: An ambitious rescue mission collapsed even before it started. Six months of nation-building and dreams of revolutionary victory ended in a few hostages. The natural conflict of two years later ended up giving the hostages dead. One saw the delivery of sophisticated war materiel to Iran. How could the delivery of sophisticated war materiel to Iran, which engaged in a protracted war with Iraq in exchange for the release of the hostages. That's more than just hours after 9/11 President Ronald Reagan's inauguration on Jan. 20, 1981.

The swap was severely lamped by Reagan's opponents even while President Jimmy Carter was still in office. Like a dramatic Hollywood movie, the hostages remained home as Reagan entered the White House and Carter remained in his private farm in Georgia in humiliation over his failure to rescue the American personnel in Iran.

As expected, Democratic political machine critics took out the clandestine operation. But the Reagan administration was quick to justify its action by saying that the safety of the hostages was paramount in all foreign policy considerations. The soft-war to Iranian sensitivities was well received by many by-of-the-American public.

Fear of Iranian fanaticism later was persuaded the US government to give in to terrorists after a car bomber crashed into a US embassy annex in Beirut, Lebanon, in October 1983 killing 258 American servicemen.

The troops had been sent to Lebanon to protect it from becoming a battleground between Palestinian militants, who were backed by Arab countries, and the Israeli army. The United States maintained its military presence in spite of repeated attacks by Palestinian activities to bolster its anti-terrorist policy.

In April 1983, terrorists executed a truck-load-of-with explosives at the US Embassy in Beirut, resulting in the death of 63 people, including 17 Americans. The attack did not have the US government would instead borrow down to the terrorists' demands to pull out its troops from that country.

Six months later, after the worst massacre of American soldiers on a single day, a decision which will match up to the present, Reagan immediately ordered an immediate withdrawal of its troops from Lebanon. The policy of standing up to terrorists was made popular by Reagan.

The move drew strong support from the American public. Many noted that the action meant breaking an international commitment, what mattered most to the US leadership at that time was keeping its troops away from the deadly attacks by Palestinian terrorists.

The same scenario was repeated in Somalia in 1993. Upon the request of the United Nations, the late President George H. Bush sent 25,000 soldiers to the African country to prevent warlords from starving its populace brought about by anarchy.

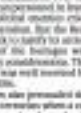
The warring tribal chieftains in that impoverished nation made it extremely difficult for the US to understand its intentions properly. The US troops were tasked with maintaining peace and order at the UN tried to stave off their intentions of the Somalis.

As things turned out, the United Nations was not aware of the Americans' abilities and their sophisticated weapons. In November 1993, a raging army of Somali terrorists killed 18 US Rangers who were part of a contingent assigned to arrest a local warlord.

In a pace that compares to what American cinemaphile Jay Leno described as the speed with which the Philippines welcome its homecoming overseas workers, Navy Petrelli's Delta Force pulled back the remaining US troops in Somalia. It didn't matter that the news represented a capitulation to terrorists and stained American prestige in the international community. Bush assigned them to the US people's memory, for the safety of its soldiers.

Here, who has the habit of giving in to the demands of terrorists?

Letting money talk



AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

to handle records for the non-Skills Workshop on Gender-responsive Budgeting, was Aimé Ongpin, executive director of the Canada Fund for Local Development Program, to help government officials in the region understand what "gender-responsive budgeting" is all about and how other countries and groups have gone about its practice.

Ongpin, who hails from Bohol, advises her fore the DSWD has government-to-could she would be able to achieve a gender equality in government policies, programs and projects. She explained that while the Philippines, the "push" for gender has later has come from international bodies, especially the UN, which has gathered them in international conferences to sign off on common goals and commitments to achieve those goals on an agreed timeline.

In her introduction to the 2002 Annual Report of the UNDP (Japan Women in Development Initiative), Ongpin recounted the rise of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which 189 world leaders adopted in September 2000, a the presidents of gender equality and the empowerment of women as effective ways of combating poverty at the local and global level are the cases of girls to practically all levels of education, the ratio of literate females to males (in those of women in parliament, and the reduction of maternal rates; and the proportion of taxes held by women in the national parliament.

"Today, the data available show that only seven countries have reached 30 percent or more, including Sweden (45.3 percent), Denmark (38 percent), Norway and Sweden—have met the levels set for ALL these MDG (Millennium)," writes Ongpin. "The low achievers among countries are concentrated in Arab countries, Latin America and South Africa."

The greatest improvements, says Ongpin, is in the proportion of seats held by women in parliaments. In 2002, 11 countries achieved the levels much of 30 percent female representation, while 20 countries reached 20 percent or more, including five in Africa and five in Asia. The Philippine average has hovered around 18 percent, with the highest percentage (21.4) in the 12th Congress. Sadly the number of women has gone down in the succeeding Congress. Still, 39 countries have a high

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

FROM THE FIRST day of the conference, the title of the session stood out in the program: "CNN versus ABC." Yes, the session was not about a war between media networks but a debate at the recently concluded 15th International AIDS Conference held in Bangkok, and the acronyms stood for "Condoms, Needle Exchange and Integrating Skills" versus "Abstinence, Being Faithful, Condoms."

What was going on?

Seeing about that session was the one that was to be the real, the "propaganda" actually agreed that there was much common ground for both "camps," and that neither slant nothing about "CNN versus ABC," one could easily create other acronyms such as ABCDR.

The debate was organized because the US government, under George W. Bush, has been emphasizing an "abstinence only" approach to health planning and the prevention of sexually transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDS. Thus policies have been implemented to support such an ABC approach, where several governments, including our own, have endorsed the prevention of HIV.

In contrast, other governments and many non-governmental organizations have been using another approach of basic behavioral for HIV prevention, which has been given the label of "CNN," emphasizing the use of condoms, the giving of needles to drug dependents, and training people to negotiate for safer sex.

There was little discussion about the issue of drug use and AIDS, as I'll note that from my article today and concentrate on the other important points brought out in that CNN/ABC session.

Dr. Chi Chi Undan was UN Stephen Hindley, director general of the International Planned Parenthood Federation. From the very beginning of his speech, Hindley said he was not opposed to ABC. What he did object to was "ABC as a last resort" approach, or the religious reactions to the so-called moral wrong influence, especially within the Bush administration and in the Vatican."

Hindley was referring to programs that talk only of abstinence and, worse, which spread lies about condoms being ineffective in blocking HIV, the virus that causes AIDS. Citing scientific research presented in papers from the World Health Organization, UNAIDS and the USAID, Hindley noted: "The male latex condom is the single most efficient available technology to reduce the sexual transmission of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections."

On the other hand, Hindley said that a recent review of abstinence-only programs in the United States showed these approaches did not result in lower pregnancy rates. The study showed that abstinence does not work as a long-term strategy, with over 60 percent of young people who pledged to keep their virginity eventually breaking their vows. Moreover, the those who did have "virgins," 55 percent admitted to engaging in non-vaginal forms of sex that were still risky.

Bridel Singh, a young Indian woman who from the UNFPA described condom abuse as our enemies and how an ABC approach to sex education happened to be the best way to prevent the spread of HIV. This is true in many Third World countries, women and young girls are often not in the position to use the ABC approach like enforced or child brides, and here in South Asian languages the term for husband is "parimaat" or "master," literally meaning God. Singh asked: "So how can I say no to that kind of a person?" Singh also noted that in India, it is difficult for me and me and sex risk a boring or even being thrown out of the house! These are the linked realities that people in my generation have to face."

Dr. Edward Carver, a medical anthropologist from the National Institutes of Health, United States Government, a long opponent, defended the ABC position. Studies said he had been sexually active until he was exposed to a university AIDS campaign, which made him decide to abstain. He had this emerging challenge: "You've not told us to wait because you do not believe we can wait. Children as say to you that we can wait. I know."

Grace, on the other hand, said he was not opposed to condoms and that in the past, he had actually been involved in social marketing projects for condoms. At the same time, he pointed out that even though there has been no reduction in the prevalence of HIV/AIDS, this has to be measured, and also has to be seen in the context of other factors that make it difficult for many women, including the problem of supply.

In each situation, Grace felt that a three-pronged approach like ABC would be more effective, at least in dealing with the more immediate causes of HIV/AIDS. Grace notes Uganda as an example of how the ABC approach has succeeded in reducing infection rates, but emphasized that the country's purpose had several distinguishing features. "...Solid leadership at the highest level, open discussion of AIDS and sexual behavior and strong mixed MDA to a national emergency AIDS prevention campaign brought to the country's children, including children before they were sexually active." During the open forum, Grace also mentioned how the Ugandan government had been strict in the enforcement of laws against older men seducing young girls.

Grace's description of Uganda is certainly a long way off from other countries in the United States or in the Philippines—would like to see, which is a law on condoms and sex education in schools. And focusing down how Uganda was reaching down on reduction of young girls reminded me about our own debates and what teachers against the "Rizal Bill" talk, which is currently raising the images of 13-year-old girls with 15-year-old girls.

The open forum brought out more views around ABC and CDR, but the most memorable comments came from Professor Hindley, a South African woman: "I want you to take my case as well as HIV-positive person who has been positive for 12 years who attended until 35, my first sexual contact was a virgin."

In the end, both Grace and Hindley agreed that is wasn't an "ABC versus CNN" issue, that different countries have different situations where ABC or CNN or some hybrid of the two might be more appropriate. Hindley also noted that "a good approach" might be appropriate in cases where the epidemic is concentrated in a particular population, and where abstinence would not use to be enforced, like Thailand did in the 1990s.

The ABC and CNN issues are relevant to the Philippines, not just for dealing with HIV/AIDS but also with problems like early pregnancies and teenage sex.

My view is that every action can't accuracy, the most appropriate messages will vary, depending on the audience. Unfortunately these discussions, we need to be scientific and rational on the speakers at the CNN/ABC session in Bangkok, stemming from sound research and program experiences, as well as listening to the life stories of people affected by the epidemic.

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Understanding without pain

LOOKING BACK

Anthony H. Cordesco

It did, response to my last column on investments during the Japanese Occupation was, using official Japanese sources was very encouraging. Many readers, especially those who lived in the Philippines history started late. I was [1] when martial law was declared and I have vivid memories of scenes dominating curfew, sources of currency and assets, etc., thing this, we would not have to rely on memory alone. Many of the memories of the military, I was sometimes worse on the receiving end of the military. I was sometimes worse on the receiving end of the military. I was sometimes worse on the receiving end of the military.

Who listened to De la Cruz?

LIFE seems ironic. What is more important: one man's life or a nation's sanctity against corruption?

I think the decision of President Macapagal-Arroyo to pull out our 51 heroes in Iraq was one that was forced or "structured" by the mastermind Filipino brain. And our President just encouraged these Filipino brain and dictated.

Despite being vocally at the mercy of murderous terrorists who had threatened to kill him, he maintained his composure. And his peaceful face told us we should not be there only. His plea for his body to be brought back to the Philippines revealed the fighting heart of a true Filipino hero. He has actually accepted to sacrifice his own life to exhort the fate on his child's existence.

Angelo de la Cruz is my hero, not the person acting in Malacañang.

—ALE BELLEZZA,
ale@pchc.ftc,
ortu_melendez@yahoo.com

Angelo should have sacrificed himself

If I were Angelo de la Cruz, I would not have wanted false pleading sent our government to rescue me from the hands of my abductors. Rather, I would have gladly offered my life for the sake of my country and people, especially my fellow overseas Filipino workers. Then I would have found our government from the present situation it is in now allowed it to attend to the multifarious problems our country is facing. From my experience I would say this encourage to my countrymen and loved ones on the eve of my beheading.

My beloved countrymen: I have been called to sacrifice. If I must die, I die for our country, for it is the most calm of us all. We have been so overwhelmed by our enormous that we forgot to exhort on the man in charge, "or forgot to learn to De la Cruz himself. Who did he say to, or in the videos that were released by the terrorist?

Despite being vocally at the mercy of murderous terrorists who had threatened to kill him, he maintained his composure. And his peaceful face told us we should be glad, keen to return. But I will not be dangerous. I shall live in the hearts of every Filipino for a long, long time.

I may not be around to receive them you my love and care and provide for your needs, but you have the entire Filipino nation to love you and take good care of you. Never worry in doing good. Live God and walk in his ways and ever remain steadfast in serving Him. Be good citizens of our beloved country. The Philippines, Filipino people and this above are stand for are worth dying for.

—GERRY A. DE LA CRUZ,
Bacolod City,
gerrycruz@yahoo.com

Basa Air Base is in Pampanga, not Batangas

I ADMIRE the way Belinda Dimzon, Executive Secretary, her on some Political Tidbits." The column is one of the few articles I read each time I take hold of my copy of the Inquirer. I feel happy there is someone who brings back memories of the past, and this is helpful to students of history and to those who want to know more about how our country has evolved from our past.

In the June 16 column, "I gets creative instead next time of evasive," I would like to call attention to the eighth paragraph which read: "Phil's closer friend from Americ. PAF pilot Conie Basa (the late) after whom Basa Air Base in Batangas was named[] was shot down and killed while in the course of patrolling the skies, he was awarded all over by 50 Japanese fighter planes."

Since the Base is in Floridablanca, Pampanga, not Batangas.

—R. RAMOS,
Marina, Santa Cruz

LETTERS

Nightmare in having the Veep as DSWD chief

I SEE a practical problem when Vice President Noli de Castro assumes the top post in the Department of Social Welfare and Development. Three past years, I have observed that in her visits to poor communities and disaster areas, President Macapagal-Arroyo would usually be accompanied by the DSWD secretary, who would almost always stay close by her side. Perhaps, she wanted her aide to be staying that close to the President, the DSWD head could listen as well to the poor people's complaints and could readily take action from her, or refer her to the implementing action on a particular case at hand.

I can dare just imagine the scenario nightmare (and taxpayers' expense) that the government would be running into since the Vice President assumes his post as the DSWD, and he begins to accompany the President on her occasional visits. Just imagine the people occupying the two highest positions in the land regularly going to the Pasig area of the country.

Or just imagine the "envy" that could cause if one of them runs out to be the "media or people's favorite" at some relief operations.

I hope my imagination is only paranoia-wild.

—RCS ARIS,
ayde@yahoo.com

Tax on text unfair to students

SO a student like me is prohibited communication when everyone knows for a fact that inefficient tax collection is the root cause of killing government revenues? Why put the burden on students like me who are struggling to finish college? Away from home, we take comfort in our messages which compromises for the absence of our loved ones. Should the government realize the tremendous, adverse emotional and social impact on students if communication with the dearest family is restricted or reduced?

During the campaign, President Macapagal-Arroyo went in the course of advertising and promoting her college education program to enlightenment her deep concern for students. Well, junking the proposal to tax text messages should show to us that she is indeed sincere in helping students.

—ADDIA DACIMO,
2931 del Pilar St.,
Sampaloc, Makati City

Anti-social, anti-urban structures

I WOULD like to include my voice to the growing public clamor for the removal of those unsightly and existing "pasit arinale" that the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority installed around the metropolis.

MMDA Chair Bayani Fernando's decision to build those stands in fact contradicts the campaign of local government agencies against urinating in public. The construction of those stands encourages people to urinate; they had holes of urinating anywhere. Using those urinals is no different from peeing against the walls, the sides of buildings, or in some hidden corners.

We have enough laws and ordinances penalizing anti-social and anti-urban behaviors. What we lack is the political will to enforce them, and the genuine effort to painstakingly convince everyone not to mess with our surroundings.

Moreover, those urinals reek. They're erected on solid ground and, except perhaps for the rains, do not have a hole to system for cleanup.

—ROBERTO VARGAS,
Barangay Mabuhay,
Mandaluyong City

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All letters addressed to the editor are requested to include their complete address and telephone or pager number or e-mail address for verification purposes. The Inquirer will not publish any letter unless such information is supplied.

[redacted]

Across the NATION

[redacted]

POLICEMEN prepare to storm the house in San Fernando, Pampanga, where alleged jueteng manager Bonquillo took two children and two maids hostage. [redacted]

Battle for 'jueteng' turf leads to hostage-taking

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—Monday's hostage-taking here by a jueteng cube (manager) was a sign of a turf war that became fiercer after the May 10 elections in Pampanga.

Rodolfo "Boyong" Bonquillo, the hostage taker, and his held hostage two people, two of their children, because he was desperate to save his life.

For almost nine hours, Bonquillo held two-old Mary Rhea and Jane Bonquillo, 5, and maids Rosie Dionisio and Cristina Carreon in Barangay Sto. Rosario here. The children's grandfather, BFP/Brigadier Agustin, suffered a heart attack while negotiating for the release of his grandchildren and maids.

Augustin, 62, died on arrival at the V. L. Makabali Memorial Hospital here.

Bonquillo said suspended jueteng operator Bibit alias "Tiger Dipz" Galang, who was an village chief of Barangay Dolores, wanted him killed allegedly by the police. Looking shaken as he talked, he told reporters that his life was in danger because of Kumpadre (a reference to jueteng competitors).

Aquino's wife said Bonquillo is an associate of suspected jueteng lord Rodolfo "Boyet" Pineda.

Galang, a relative of Bonquillo's common-law wife, declared Bonquillo's allegations.

The raids, however, reinforced rumors brought to market for Pineda, who allegedly controlled jueteng in several regions, including Central Luzon, when former President Joseph Estrada was in power until January 2001.

Bonquillo, for his side, was dismissed in more than DPOS figures, said by the top executive of Pineda, were sent to the camp of Galang.

Jesus Aquino, a brother of the policemen, said it was the first time he saw Bonquillo on Monday at their house. Me policemen both on his said, was never involved in jueteng.

Bonquillo also said it was the first time that Bonquillo, a native of Bonquillos, Marcos Bojo, went to Aquino's house.

Pineda's younger brother, Rubio, helped negotiate with Bonquillo's child and met that the children, a police official said.

Aquino is the police and jueteng trade said Pineda, deployed for almost four years, has established jueteng networks in 15 towns and four cities (it) under from the city and Bibit.

The sources said Pineda returned after supporting many candidates for the 2004 elections.

Senior Supt. Nilanor Tango, San Fernando police chief, said Bonquillo ran to Aquino's house, which is next city hall, when police teams tried to arrest him for his involvement in jueteng.

Aquino and Bonquillo sought help from his policeman brother because his life was in danger from these unidentified men.

Dionisio seized the chance to escape with Mary Rhea when Bonquillo took a stroll check from another room at about 2 p.m.

Aquino, held their ground as a team of negotiators that included City of San Fernando Mayor Oscar Rodriguez and Pampanga Gov. Mark Lapid, pushed for the release of Carreon and Lim.

Bonquillo released Carreon and Lim at 4:25 p.m. Monday.

"This is a worst area in the fight for control of jueteng areas," a police official said.

Authorities were still unsure if Bonquillo was the same one's influential operator who used the initials "BG."

[redacted]

Woman NPA finance officer captured

By Dino A. Ivanan
[redacted]

TAGBILARAN CITY—A ranking female officer of the New People's Army (NPA) was captured in Mindoro following a clash between the communist guerrillas and government forces in Lila town, about 23 kilometers east of the city.

Supt. Sotero Olvidado, Bohol police director, identified the rebel as Remerita Gilanca, 39, Alfa Team finance officer who was known by her aliases Ket and Tilay.

Captured with Gilanca was Bohol-an Bandanon, 32, who claimed to be a native of Surigao del Sur but who was working in Barangay Bunay, Calape town.

"People can no longer have with the difficulties of supporting the rebels," Bonquillo said after his capture on Tuesday.

SPO4 Roberto Canda, Lila police chief, said the two were part of a 20-strong rebel band that figured in a gunfight with a joint police team at about 10:30 a.m. on Monday in Barangay Cabasiu, about three kilometers from the town proper.

Canda was part of the team composed of policemen from the Lila police station, the 703rd and 702nd Mobile Groups led by SPO2 Elmer Arjona and SPO1 Marcelo Bagunguna.

The Lila police chief said the encounter arose was near the Cabasiu Elementary School and the residence of Barangay Captain Gaudencio Cartigilla.

The joint police team went to the area to check on the information about the presence of the group believed led by one Ka Compoy, Pente 1 commander.

Reinaldo said the government team was approaching the place where a corpse lived but missed his target.

He said the gunfight lasted for about 30 minutes before the rebels withdrew into the mountain barangays on the boundary of Lobo town.

There was no casualty on the government side. Canda said he believed the rebels suffered casualties because the group found blindness on their route.

Olivador and Barcaso were arrested during the clearing operations.

Reinaldo said the raid team recovered an M-16 Armalite rifle with serial no. RF 049 648, a .30 cal. revolver with four bullets, assorted ammunition and communication equipment.

Monday's encounter brought to seven the number of reported insurgency-related cases in Bohol this year.

Mayors say IRA at stake in race for league head

LUCENA CITY—Several mayors had alleged that the Internal Revenue Allotment of cities here reduction should a mayor who is not a member of the ruling party win the presidency of the League of Cities of the Philippines.

Mayors Sol Morales of Cavite City, Sr. Antonio of San Pablo City, Benito Lim of Dagupan City and Rodolfo Ponitan of Iloilo City made the statement in a press release issued with the election of heads of mayors' leagues here and other areas.

Candidates Mayor David Gallano promised to his members that he would help them all on how to settle crisis Malacañang for their projects and funding requirements.

"The first thing that I promised to my members was that I would help them approach President Macapagal-Arroyo for their needs," Gallano told the league, so as he explained how he won as head of the Quezon mayors' league despite numerous opposition congressmen.

He admitted that his candidacy had the backing of Malacañang.

During the election held in Quezon, Binguenete, Aurel Bichara, one of President Arroyo's trusted lieutenants in Southern Tagalog, was seen always at the side of Gallano making frequent cell phone calls.

After the announcement that Gallano won, Mely Adeda, the acknowledged "little president" here in Quezon with her close connection left to the President, is supposed at the venue to congratulate Gallano.

As Gallano was going to the rostrum Imagen and Bancalino, the Lakas-NUCD chair in Quezon, was able to have the lids in his face despite the intervention of his influential congressmen by virtue of his position to have contact with Ms Arroyo. [redacted]

Villages under quarantine to prevent malaria spread

By Jeffrey Tupas
PDI Mindanao Bureau

KIDAPAWAN CITY—At least 122 people have been hit by an outbreak of malaria in five towns of South Cotabato, forcing health authorities to put several villages under quarantine.

Arnold Gimayan, provincial health office malaria control program leader, said they have stepped up the campaign to stop the spread of the mosquito-borne disease.

Gimayan said they have already quarantined several upland villages in the towns of Lake Sebu, T'boli, Surallah, Tupi, and Banga.

He identified the villages of Seri and Hallian of Lake Sebu as the hardest hit, with at least 40 people deemed by the disease.

Other areas that are under quarantine are Sumagaya Sitio, Sikwelo and Tagag in T'boli; Sitio Manlimanog in Barangay Cebuanon, Tupi; and Sitio Lambakay in Barangay Lamba, Banga.

"The number of cases is quite high compared to the number that we have recorded last year in the same period . . . but so far no death has been reported," Gimayan said.

The persons who have been afflicted with the disease, he said, came from the same areas where the outbreak of malaria was noted in the past few years.

Malaria is sometimes fatal disease caused by a parasite. The World Health Organization estimated over 2.7 million deaths per year due to malaria.

Symptoms of malaria include fever and flu-like illness, chills, headache, muscle aches, and tiredness. Nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea may also occur.

Cinnarizine and some of its uses were found in Colombia and Pakistan, Indian Kashmir where malaria is considered to be more endemic than in South Lusaka.

STAKEOUT
Journalists join the vigil at Buenavista village in Phatics, Pampanga for hostage Angelo de la Cruz but for a different reason—to get a scoop.

ROUNDUP

Life term for rapist

CAMAYAN, Isabela— The Supreme Court affirmed the life sentence on a man who raped his sister-in-law in Tuao, Cagayan on 1998. The SC's second division also asked Orlando Taomin to pay P100,000 in damages to his sister-in-law. Sorbito claimed that no rape took place because he and his sister-in-law were lovers. In affirming the six-year trial court's decision, the high tribunal said the woman "would not confess a charge of rape against [Sorbito] just under go the embarrassment and tribulations of a public trial merely because [he] decided to serve their universal relationship." Court records said the woman, whose husband was working in Manila, was raped inside the house of their aunt in Tuao.
Villamor Obispo Jr., PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

Crackdown on gambling

BALANGA CITY—A top Bataan police official has ordered a crackdown on illegal gambling in the province, particularly the popular cockfighting game pukpuk. Supt. Rene Masangcay said he issued the order to all police commanders to intensify the campaign against jueteng, sakla (a card game), video-karera (a video game) and illegal cockfighting. He denied reports that he was protecting a jueteng operator in the province. He said the police have arrested 20 jueteng and cockfighting operators since he assumed office on June 30.
Greg Rafinesque, PDI Central Luzon Desk

Road mishap kills 3 workers

MARIVELES, Bataan— Three workers were killed while 13 others were seriously injured on Tuesday last week when their jeepney hit a container van parked on a road shoulder in Barangay Alas-asin here, police said. The fatalities were identified as Mylene Bello, 19; Marjorie Fernandez, 22; and Mary Jane Malololes, 23, all workers at the Bataan Economic Zone. Police said most of the injured victims were factory workers inside the EZ. The EZ police said the jeepney driver, identified as Rodriel Castillo, overtook a 10-wheel truck and hit the container van.
Greg Rafinesque, PDI Central Luzon Desk

Village treasurer killed

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—A motorcycle-riding gunman ambushed and killed a Barangay treasurer on Monday morning in Macabalan, Pampanga. Senior Insp. Irma Torres, Macabebe deputy police chief, said the victim, Pedro Garcia, 50, of Barangay Saint in Calumpit, Bulacan, was attacked while he was driving a jeepney. His companion, Rolando de Jesus, 31, was wounded. The two were in Macabebe to deliver antique grills, police said.
Evaette Angeles, PDI Central Luzon Desk

Bomb threat in court

CITY OF MALOLOS—A bomb hoax on Monday fooled court employees of the regional trial court here. Workers panicked and hurriedly left the new Justice Hall here after court employee Dennis Bautista got a call from a man telling him that a bomb had been planted at the premises. A bomb disposal unit of the Special Weapons Arms and Tactics team of the Bulacan police combed the area but found no bomb.
Concepcion Rayos, PDI Central Luzon Desk

3 farmers awarded

CALAMBA CITY— The provincial government gave cash awards to three farmers in Nueva Ecija for topping the competition on hybrid rice production. Fabillo de la Fuente of Barangay Sibut in Talavera town received P50,000 for harvesting 200 cavans from his one-hectare farm and netting an income of P71,144. Fernando Gahuza of Barangay Tondod in San Jose City received P25,000 for harvesting 150 cavans and netting P78,000. Noel Dofiado of Barangay Sagrada in Sto. Domingo town harvested 174 cavans and earned a net of P63,000. He received P25,000.
Annaliza Dingus, PDI Central Luzon Desk

Hangyan lawyer appointed

CALAMBA CITY—Lawyer Renato Cosme Evangelista, 39, a Hanunuo Mangyan, has been appointed as the Oriental Mindoro legal officer starting July by Gov. Reinstorm Baccagan Dr. Evangelista's appointment, however, is subject to confirmation by the provincial board. The position has been vacant for three years. Evangelista had been working in a private firm in Manila before he accepted the post.
Rhodora Olmos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

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Uncovering Baguio's history via stamps

By Maurice Malanes
Baguio City

A HOBBY that helped send him to medical school also helped him write the first book about the Philippine summer capital's history through stamps he has collected for decades.

Dr. Charles Chong is the first person to ever write such a book. Making the book unique is his collection of stamps that dates back to his childhood, the late father introduced him to a hobby which, according to her father, had for centuries not only school boys but kings as well.

Chong and his co-author, Katherine Bernardino, that made history themselves when they wrote and research hundred "Baguio History Through Stamps—Philippines."

Complete with stamps photographed from Chong's collection, the 3,064-page book focuses on Baguio and the Cordillera's history as it relates this with the history of the whole archipelago.

The book tells about the ignot tribe's first trading partners before Ferdinand Magellan landed on Limasawa island. It tells about how Chinese traders during the Song Dynasty (960-1126 AD) traded with the Igorots in Benguet what is now Aparri, Cagayan, and Vigan, Ilocos Sur.

It also tells about what lured both Spanish and American colonizers to Baguio and the Cordillera—the mountain region's rich natural resources, particularly gold.

DR. CHARLES Chong's book on stamps and Baguio City's history

Couriers, Queen Isabel

The book recounts the evolution of the postal service system during the Spanish regime. At first, the Spanish central and municipal governments employed unpaid "badjao" or couriers to deliver mail either on foot or on horseback.

On Dec. 7, 1852, Governor General Antonio de Urbiztondo issued a circular that called for the establishment of a prepaid postage system. The system became in place starting Feb. 1, 1854.

At that time, the prepaid postage system revolutionized the crude and slow communication system that relied on couriers in the same way that electronic mail now has altered the speed at which communications are sent.

And the characters behind the first stamps during the Spanish period were also spiced up the book. Isabel II, the daughter of King John II by his second wife, Isabel of Portugal.

Highlights of the queen's colorful life were encapsulated in the book.

Chong and Bernardino documented how Baguio's and the country's history has unfolded as from the first stamps that came after Urbiztondo's circular to the stamps issued by the short-lived First Republic under Emilio Aguinaldo, and those issued later by the Japanese-imposed Republic of the Philippines during World War II.

Cordillera heroes

The book particularly pays tribute to Igorot heroes, like Mrs. Inoki Oyagen, Mrs. Gloria Molintas, and other unsung heroes and heroines who joined the guerrilla movement under the 66th Infantry Division of the United States Armed Forces in the Far East (USAFFE) during the late war.

Illustrating this tribute to the volunteerism and heroism of the Igorot defenders of Baguio and Cervigalid were several stamps issued on Dec. 8, 1991, which commemorated the 50th anniversary of the USAFFE's induction in 1941.

The book, for example, tells about how Igorots offered 32 bases in Imugan 4,000 or so Americans at Camp John Hay before the Japanese arrived. Dangwa's clerks made the book describe as "the great escape" by the Americans made him the most wanted country of the Japanese.

Some ethnic Chinese, who were skilled in radio telecommunications and electronics, joined and helped Dangwa's regiment repair radio communications gadgets so they could communicate with soldiers in various battlefields.

Other stamps were issued on Dec. 16, 1993 to honor the various Philippine guerrilla units of World War II, which included the USAF as the Philippines-Northern Luzon.

Stamps were issued on May 28, 1998 to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the liberation of Baguio, which, according to the book, would leave not been possible without the sacrifices, heroism and patriotism of Igorots and other Chinese both.

Emerging from war

Through the book, Filipinos can appreciate that right after World War II, a favorite venue for international conferences and seminars was Baguio. The first international event in Baguio after putting up from the ravages of war was a conference by the United Nations Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East (Ecafe).

A set of stamps was issued on Nov. 24, 1947 to commemorate the historical event.

A year later, the UN Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) held a conference in the city to deal with the problem of hunger and malnutrition.

The success of the Ecafe and FAO conferences prompted other global organizations to hold their conferences in Baguio. These included the International Court of Justice on Peace in 1958 and the International Planned Parenthood Federation of Southeast Asia and Oceania on March 22-27, 1973.

One could also learn about the government

figures that set foot on Baguio, like Thailand's King Bhumibol Adulyadej and Queen Sirikit (July 9, 1960), Indonesian President Ahmed Sukarno and his wife (Jan. 20, 1961), and Pope John Paul II (February 1981).

Broad horizons

The history of how Baguio evolved, not only as an international convention capital but also as a health resort and educational center could be traced through the stamps Chong has collected over the years.

Even at this age when young people are preoccupied with following with their mobile phones, surfing the Net, and mailing, Chong would like to challenge young people to start collecting stamps.

Collecting stamps, Chong says, "broadens one's horizons." He says stamps can inform one about important leaders, heroes, historical events, space travel and many more.

"Families who stick together find collecting stamps an enjoyable group activity that makes family members closer with one another," he says. "It is a hobby that would last a lifetime and could be passed on to the next generation."

Besides the stamps (such as his new book with Bernardino are other stamps, such as those featuring the various presidents of the Philippines, complete with their cronies, various Philippine costumes, flora and fauna and trees.

"The other collections are produce other area of books," says Bernardino, who co-authored with Chong other pioneering books on the history of ethnic Chinese in the Cordillera and the dangers of parasitic use in Benguet.

For the authors, history is never complete and it continues to be written. Particularly for his retired philatelist eye, Chong, a full-time medical doctor attending mostly to poor charity patients, says history continues to unfold through the stamps issued at the post office.

These stamps, he says, must be collected so future generations can remember where they came from.

'A wonderful moment,' exults President GMA

"OVERJOYED." Arroyo, wife of De la Cruz, says after talking to her husband during a news conference in Amman, Jordan on Tuesday. REUTERS

[illegible]

The circumstances of De la Cruz's release were still unclear. But after announcements that he was finally free, reports a day after the last Filipino soldiers deployed in Iraq 11 months ago withdrew from that embattled country, relief hit captors had threatened to behead him.

"Maraming salamat po sa mga panawagang nabuo nyo sa akin, sinu-pot at dinggin-dalangin ko Diyos (Thank you so much for your help, this is Angelo de la Cruz, ma'am)," were the first words uttered by De la Cruz when he talked from the trusted desk from the Embassy in Baghdad at 1:05 p.m. (Manila time).

Ms Arroyo, who took the call on her Nokia mobile phone on speakerphone mode, was overjoyed somberly as a hostage ordeal but here he is up once she heard her promise man's voice.

'I can't hear you well'

During his five-minute talk with the President, De la Cruz sounded like he was overwhelmed by what was happening around him or could not hear Ms Arroyo, and at times could only mumble, "Opo, opo (Yes, ma'am, yes, ma'am)."

"Yes, ma'am. I'm happy now," he also said in Tagalog.

At one point, he also said: "Sa ma'am. I cannot hear you very well. Please pardon me if I had said something wrong while answering you, ma'am."

Ms Arroyo had to cut short the phone conversation because of the apparently choppy connection.

After putting down the phone, Ms Arroyo raised both of her arms and raised "Praise God!" to the cheers of several officials in her office.

At midday, Jakarta time, Ms Arroyo broke the news of De la Cruz's release to media at the Bogor Palace, quoting sources in the Iraqi National Congress. The INC later said he is De la Cruz was freed in front of the UAE's Embassy in Baghdad.

Another Arabic TV channel, Al-Jazeera, quoted a UAE Embassy official as saying that De la Cruz was brought to the embassy at about 10:30 a.m. (Iraq time) and told that he should no longer inside.

Embassy officials said there was no coordination between them and the kidnappers, Al-Jazeera said.

"We were surprised this morning to receive the Philippine hostage in Iraq, Mr. Angelo de la Cruz, who was set free by his kidnappers and handed to our embassy in Baghdad," National Alliance of Iraqi Unity, the ruling bloc in Iraq, said in a statement.

Filipino officials arrived at the embassy and chose De la Cruz away, about three hours later, in a silver Mercedes. He later ate a meal of noodles with Philippine Embassy staff.

Foreign Undersecretary Rafael Seguis said the UAE had allowed our aircraft to fly De la Cruz directly to Abu Dhabi today for a medical checking before he goes back home.

The first video footage of De la Cruz in three days showed him looking tired and sporting a shaggy look. Seguis believes his knees, and wearing slippers as he sat beside a dark, grabbed looking official of the United Arab Emirates.

The crew of the UAE's TV television network, which was apparently at the scene, said De la Cruz was in semi and that he hands were shaking.

"I just spoke to him. His health is good, his spirits high and he sends salutes to every Filipino for their thoughts and prayers," Ms Arroyo told the nation.

"To the family of Angelo, he will come home soon," she said in Kapampangan for the benefit of her province mates.

De la Cruz's release from captivity ended a harrowing tale of a poor truck driver who left his family in Barangay Bunsuran and flew across the world in search for money that would lift his wife and children out of poverty.

A few days after De la Cruz's abduction, his captors—the previously unknown militant group Khalid bin al-Walid—released a video showing him kneeling. In another video later, De la Cruz begged Ms Arroyo to save his life.

On 8 Oct apparently came to within a hair's breadth of being beheaded.

No regrets

On July 12, his captors said they had taken him to big places of execution and given him food and water.

That was just about when the drama administration backed down and said it was withdrawing its troops in Iraq as soon as possible.

Defending her move to withdraw the Philippine contingent, Ms Arroyo said yesterday: "I made a decision to bring our troops home a few days early in order to spare the life of Angelo. I do not regret that decision."

She added, with a hint of warning to all other overseas Filipino workers: "Every life is important. Angelo was spared, and we rejoice. We are all rewarded for it, particularly his loving family and friends. But our people must also know that will not always be the case. Innocents will come to harm's way, and circumstances may not allow such a successful outcome."

Referring to how a simple man like De la Cruz had wielded the nation together, Ms Arroyo said, "See Angelo, our nation—Muslim and Christian alike—united around one mission for its innocent in a world of danger."

"Who has become a Filipino everyman," she said.

Dangerous times

"Your government worked tirelessly for his release. On various prongs vigilantly for his well-being. I am grateful for the unstinting efforts, Filipinos and foreigners, who helped facilitate the negotiations and extended goodwill," Ms Arroyo said.

She added: "It was a time of trial and a time of triumph. But it is also a time of solemn reflection for what would be asked in her and our obligation to our nation and to humanity."

Ms Arroyo paid tribute to the Philippine contingent she had withdrawn from Iraq, saying: "I am proud of the work we have done and the courage and determination displayed by our troops and workers there."

But while De la Cruz's family found relief, Ms Arroyo also was not that "our happiness must be tempered by the awareness that we live in dangerous times."

"Definitely no ransoms were paid," presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said, denying news reports that ransom had changed hands to secure De la Cruz's freedom.

Prayers to the Virgin

The President already has plans for De la Cruz when he comes home.

"I will take him to Mount in Rosales (Pangasinan) because I prayed to the Our Lady of Rosales for his release," Ms Arroyo said.

Malacañang had apparently anticipated De la Cruz would be freed some days before Ms Arroyo made the announcement.

As early as 8:30 a.m., Palace reporters were told that Ms Arroyo would hold an "emergency news conference at anytime."

Ordinary folk and churchmen welcomed De la Cruz's release.

"It is good that Angelo is coming home after his ordeal. Our life is more important than riches," said Cardinal Jaime Sin of Manila.

"Thank God it happened. I hope that the repercussions will be favorable to our country," Cebu Archbishop Ricardo Cardinal Vidal told the newsmen.

Vidal, however, had one message for De la Cruz family. "They should be humble enough to recognize that it is the Lord that decides on things and we should thank Him and the people who prayed for Angelo's release."

Bacolod Bishop Monte Navarro said, "He is obliged to thank the people for their prayers and not me ... What is important is that a life was saved."

The US Embassy said in a statement: "Our thoughts and prayers have been with Angelo de la Cruz, his family, and the Philippine throughout this ordeal. We applaud the Philippine government's announcement that he has been released. We condemn the targeting of innocent civilians, such as Angelo de la Cruz."

Another Laguna resident, Espie Ilio, was unmoved. "Angelo's case was given too much attention by the government at the expense of Filipinos who are suffering."

Iraqi militants have seized dozens of foreigners since April to press demands for foreign troops to leave Iraq, to deter foreigners from working with US forces or to execute executions.

Most foreigners have been freed, including an Egyptian released on Monday but at least four others had been beheaded. An American and a South Korean were beheaded by a group led by Jordanian militant Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, accused by Washington of having links to Osama bin Laden's al-Qaeda network.

Egyptian driver Mohammed al-Ghandour was freed on Monday after the Saudi firm he worked for met kidnappers' demands by promising to stop doing work in Iraq. (Story in The World, Page A20.) With reports from Associated Press, Reuters, PDI Baghdad Bureau Chief Luzon Bureau, Bernadette Bueno and Carlos P. Gomez, PDI Pampanga Bureau.

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Signature of Applicant

Signature of Parent/Guardian

Signature of Witness

Signature of Witness

'Tata lost so much weight . . .

Jadeh said they would feed their father leafy servings of crispy pata (pork leg) so he could gain his weight back.

Mother no. 1 Yanel Alegado to set Father is alive! He will be with us!," the De la Cruz children chanted, jumping for joy and embracing each other as they saw that their father might was alive and safe in the United Arab Emirates Embassy where he was rescued now by his Iraqi captors on the outskirts of Philippine authorities.

Brutal Welfare Secretary Gonzalez "Bunky" Soliman was witness to the joyous scene.

Wife thanks kidnappers

In Bunsuran, Jordan, Arroyo, the wife of De la Cruz, expressed thanks to her husband's kidnappers for not harming him.

"I am very, very happy. His health is OK ... His family is waiting for him," a tearful Arroyo told reporters at the Philippine Embassy minutes after talking by telephone to her husband in Baghdad.

"I thank his captors for not harming him. I prayed for him," she said. Arroyo was overjoyed by a mother of her husband's and Labor Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas, traveled to Amman shortly after the false alarm on Angelo's release on July 19.

"I don't know if you" Jacqueline, 19, the fourth of De la Cruz's eight children, said upon hearing the news on the late local reporters after 12 days of confusion here since July 9. But days after then father was rescued by Iraqi militants.

On the verge of tears

Relatives de la Cruz, Angelo's father, was on the verge of tears as he shared with reporters what he was feeling now that his son, the oldest in his own brood of eight, was safe.

"Kay habay ko'y parang walang katumpas an (My life seemed like it would never end)," Feliciano said.

Jeanette, 11, the uncle of Angelo's children, said "Siempre, nasaring maraye (Of course, I'm very, very happy)," when he was asked how he felt.

Jerich, 7, the seventh child whose need for an operation on his blind right eye had prompted his father to go to work in Saudi Arabia, was oblivious of the media attention on his family.

He played with a swivel chair as his siblings and other relatives answered questions from reporters.

Also present at the press conference called by Soliman at 4 p.m. were Nene Wilfor de la Cruz, a brother of Angelo's who also works in Saudi Arabia but who took a leave to be with the rest of the family at the end of the crisis, and two other children, Jolanda, 24, and Joanne, 15.

Still in hospital

The youngest child, Jeffrey, 4, was in the hospital, recuperating from acute bronchitis, Soliman said. Jessa, 22, the third child, was with Jeffrey at the hospital.

While Soliman at the press conference was Governor Wahiden Philliber Administration General Lomar, director Manuwela Abenado who was the children's guardian while they were in the government's custody.

Jadeh said they had not yet talked to their father in the Philippines. He said their mother, Arsenia, in a phone call at 1:30 p.m. (Manila time) Tuesday, asked for more prayers. She did not say if she and her husband were running home together.

Feliciano, who talked to President Macapagal-Arroyo on the phone in the middle of the press conference, said the President invited the family to hear Mass at the Our Lady of Manaoag Church in Pangasinan.

Feliciano said the family would discuss plans as soon as Angelo arrives.

"For now, we want to be reunited with him," he said.

In Bunsuran, other relatives and neighbors of De la Cruz jumped, cried and shouted for joy as the President announced on television: "The crisis is over." (Story on Page A1.)

Thanks to GMA

"Bayan ko, bakunat pol bakunat pol (My God, Thank you! Thank you!)" was all that Beth Arroyo, De la Cruz's younger sister, could say as she shed happy tears.

The De la Cruz siblings, relatives and neighbors repeatedly thanked Ms Arroyo, their kababayan (province mate), for rescuing De la Cruz's release.

They also thanked CDC president Bienvenido Laguesma who worked as their lawyer, actually one of the relies in Clark, for De la Cruz's children as the crisis was raging. With Desiree Cabuso, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau, and Reuters

Euphoria sweeps town, grand welcome set

From page A1

Social Welfare Secretary Corazon Soliman issued the directive at 10 a.m. He quoted Arroyo as saying that "it's better to be prepared."

"We are just preparing, thinking of this in a positive way. We don't want disorder in the village when he returns," the governor said referring to De la Cruz, adding: "I'm 100 percent sure he is coming home within a few days. Kung awards ngayon, siguro sa (If it's possible, today)."

The provincial, municipal and barangay government were represented at the meeting.

Among those present were Lucia Escalona, Barangay social welfare officer; Jonas Hinahuyos, Central Luzon social welfare commissioner; Jessie Tuazon, Mexico municipal engineer; Allen Bonifacio, coordinator of the organization for overseas Filipino workers (Migrante), and a number of teachers in the village.

PHAM Gad, President Arroyo rejoices in Malacañang moments after talking by phone to De la Cruz. —

Grand event

Mexico Mayor Teddy Tumang said the local government would spend for what he described as a "grand" homecoming.

Lapid said he had no idea how many guests would arrive here expected there to come from all walks of life.

"I'm happy I have my brother," declared Ruth Reyes, a younger sister of Angelo's. "I'd like to go to the airport when he comes, and to Malacañang to thank the President."

Willie de la Cruz, Angelo's younger brother who is also an overseas worker, arrived in the village on Monday night to join the family in welcoming his Angelo.

On Angelo's return to the country, his eight children who had been staying in a villa at the Clark Special Economic Zone during the entire hostage crisis will be taken to the Ninoy Aquino International Airport to be reunited with their parents, Lapid said.

He said the De la Cruz family would then call on Ms Arroyo in Malacañang.

Angelo's wife Amorita and his brother Jesse were earlier flown by the Philippine government to Amman, Jordan, to be closer to developments.

Lapid said it would be up to the family members to decide whether they would proceed to or return from Amman or head to Clark.

In Manila, government officials began studying options for Angelo's arrival.

Sources said they were studying whether Mr Arroyo would go to the Subic or welcome Angelo at Bonoyoma.

Crisis committees

At the Department of Labor and Employment, a new crisis management committee was formed by Labor Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas as part of the government's reaction to Angelo's abduction.

The committee is headed by Labor Undersecretary Manuel Imson. Its members are the administrators of the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration and the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration, and the director of the BOLE's International Labor Affairs Service.

Its objective is to strengthen security measures for all Filipino workers in war-torn or high-risk countries.

At the same time, Sto. Tomas ordered all Philippine Overseas Labor Offices (Polos) to update their monthly registry of employers and Filipino workers and to designate a staff officer in each company in-take charge of the security and monitoring of Filipino workers.

Sto. Tomas stipulated that a Filipino worker, who would monitor the security of his co-workers, would also be designated as a counterpart of the companies' staff officer.

"Once the local persons are identified, the Polo shall immediately coordinate an orientation training on matters relating to coordination and seminars, and enclose a realistic security plan," Sto. Tomas said in her directive.

All reports of the Polos are to periodically to the crisis management committee. *With reports from AP, Marites P. Meryll in Manila*

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Tour perks await best tourist cops

By Tonyl. Santos

FROM A DESIGNATED...

There is more to meet the patriarch behind the patrol tourists than bicycles, which the Department of Tourism (DOT) has promised to provide them for use in their job.

Lawmen to be tabbed as the best "Tourist-Oriented Police" or TOP may themselves become visitors to the country's scenic destinations, said Chief Insp. Ret. Buenaventura Apolinario of the Bicol Capitol Region Police Office (BCPO).

Buenaventura said the travel package would be part of the incentives being prepared by the tourism department under Secretary Roberto Pagdanganan.

All-expense paid

He added that the trip to any tourist spot in the country would be paid for in full by the DOT on top of a cash gift.

Buenaventura explained that the criteria will include the most number of arrests made on reports pursuing countries.

The best tourist policemen will also be chosen based on their crime reduction efficiency and responsibility of being the most tourist-friendly.

Earlier, the DOT committed to donating bicycles to TOP.

Around 1,000 members of the civil disturbance unit of the NCR-PNPolice have recognized and designated tourist policemen in a joint project of the police command in Metro Manila and the tourism department.

Abrupt shift

In an abrupt shift in functions, policemen trained in crowd control and dealing with violent rallyists and demonstrations now become tourism-related role of accommodating foreign and local tourists visiting the country.

In June said the secretary of Task Group Mid Metro was meant to ensure a peaceful environment for Metro Manila's tourists, who occasionally fall victim to crimes.

The policemen would be deployed in tourism spots like Intramuros, Libis, Ortigas Center and The Fort.

The BCRPO chief expressed confidence that the MCRPO's partnership with the DOT would prove productive in the pursuit of developing Metro Manila as a prime tourism destination.

SECURE BANKING
A bomb-sniffing dog checks the interior of a bank at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport during routine security checks. [illegible]

LTO gives go signal to 'vanity'

By Clarissa S. Batino

TAPPING new sources of revenue, the Land Transportation Office has given the go signal for the proceeding of applications for vanity license plates next month, ending a windfall of at least P1.5 billion that government can fish over a five-year period.

The LTO stopped issuing vanity plates—license plates bearing favorite letters or numbers of vehicle owners—in September 2003 after it found out that this had been a source of corruption in the agency, and had cost confidential to revenue-raising efforts of the government.

The LTO had classified the vanity plates into three types: the limited edition, with an auction sale of P50,000 each, and personalized series editions at P10,000 and P100,000 each, based on the implementing rules and regulations (IRR) recently issued by the LTO.

The IRR should ensure that the processing of applications for vanity plates would be above board and the proceeds would benefit the government, according to LTO chief Arnold Lontoc.

Under the 12-page IRR, owners of cars, sport utility vehicles, vintage and collectors' item vehicles, Asian utility vehicles and sports pickups are eligible to apply for the special plates.

But public utility vehicles, cargo trucks, service-related and taxis, tow trucks, motorcycles, funeral hearse and tourist vehicles, government vehicles and diplomatic cars are not qualified.

According to the IRR, the transfer of a vanity license plate to other motor vehicles and discharged by LTO shall be considered as an illegal transfer subject to confiscation and payment of fines.

Qualified vehicle owners have the options to avail of the limited, personalized or series editions. The auction would be conducted for the limited edition, and car owners interested in buying these plates may choose from pre-listed characters combinations set by the LTO.

Owners of limited edition plates have the right to choose and "hold out" certain license plate combination. The system that no other vehicle owner can choose the same combination.

Premium clients could have the moment's chosen three-letter and three-number alphanumeric combination.

Limited edition plates could bear the moment's name, some common words that are no shorter than two characters and no longer than six characters, or any other alphanumeric combination that can be found in the LTO's catalog of pre-determined numbers.

The vanity plates have no expiration date unless cancelled by LTO. They should be used with regular license plates and should be placed at the rear portion of the vehicle, engraved or etched on the regular plate.

The issuance of the IRR followed Presidential Memorandum 69 released last year, authorizing the Transportation Department to order the LTO to issue personalized license plates as a bid to boost government income.

The LTO move, however, drew criticism from Metropolitan Manila Development Authority Chair Bayani Fernando.

"We are totally against it," Fernando told the Inquirer in a phone interview. "It's just vanity. These plates have no place in our roads."

Fernando stressed that the vanity plates would affect the current standard Traffic Separation System.

Some drivers could even use the vanity plates as a means to elude authorities, he added.

"We are trying to put things in order for motorists, and these plates would only aggravate the traffic situation in Metro Manila," Fernando said.

MMDA sees fresh start with mayors

By Margaux C. Ortiz

SCHOOL that there will be a better relationship between the new members of the Metro Manila Council (MMC) and the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority, MMDA Chair Bayani Fernando yesterday expressed confidence that they could have real solve issues. But have been plaguing the metropolis in years.

Fernando said he would bring up issues like traffic, garbage, flood control and planning in the next MMC gathering, wherein he would also meet with seven newly elected mayors of Metro Manila.

"I am confident that there will be a good working relationship between the MMDA and the present crop of mayors," he said.

He stated that some of the mayors had even requested the MMDA to assist them in implementing regulations on road use like sidewalk clearing operations.

In the past, Fernando locked horns with members of the present MMC on many of the agency's projects, including its anti-illegal vending program and the right-of-way system.

The officials were on their way back to Manila with colleagues after visiting an affiliated school complex in Lopez, Quezon.

Witnesses said two men fired at the jeep but did not harm their colleagues.

The two gunmen escaped on a motorcycle that a third companion had kept nearby.

Bello earlier earlier said that Turla was probably the real target of the gunmen, who could have been hired killers. The motives, however, refused to say who ordered the professor killed and why.

The colleagues at the IUE however, said school politics could be behind the murder.

Turla was a popular student activist in the mid-1980s. He later taught sociology and political science in the PUP and worked part-time at the university's Human Rights Center.

Ex-cop faces murder raps for Turla slay

By Leila B. Salaverria

MURDER complaints have been filed by the Philippine Bureau of Investigation against a former policeman and two unidentified persons for allegedly killing Polytechnic University of the Philippines professor and human rights activist Eliseo Turla and his driver, Salvador Encinilla, in San Pablo, Laguna, last February 8.

The complaints were filed in the San Pablo City Prosecutor's Office against PO3 Cesar Vil. Ismerio, a dismissed policeman. The identities of the two others suspected are not known.

PBI National Capital Region Investigation agent Alex Bautista said Villanueva was identified by at least two witnesses as the one who fired at Turla and Encinilla when their vehicle stopped at an intersection in San Pablo City on July 12.

'English only' gains ground

By Tarra Y. Quismundo

Manila's move "English-only policy" appears to be getting the nod of its school superiors.

Per Manila's Division of City Schools, the English proficiency drive, a project of Manila Mayor Lito Atienza Jr., would be good for the city's public school students.

"We have remedial English classes, but the program has not been fully implemented," said Isabelita Santos, division superintendent.

Santos, who oversees Manila's 32 public high schools, noted that many students lack English skills, as shown in the results of diagnostic tests.

Atienza's directive of imposing the "English-only" policy in the city's public schools to help graduates acquire English skills needed for prized jobs after graduation.

City Hall's latest project would require the use of English as the medium of instruction and communication in all—owned colleges by school year.

"Filipino graduates have the technical skills, but when it comes to English, they lag behind the others," said Atienza.

The policy would be implemented initially in the Dimasalang ng Lungsod ng Maynila, the City Colleges of Manila, and the Kolehiyo Benigno Aquino of Science and Technology.

Later, it would be undertaken in public elementary and high schools, now experimenting the diversified curriculum.

The education department then promotes both Filipino and English as teaching subjects.

But Manila Public School Teachers Association president Benjo Villanueva thinks otherwise.

"Filipino is still the most effective medium of instruction," he said.

He explained that as most public school students speak Filipino in their households, making them understand lessons in the native language would be best.

"This is to address discussing the importance of English training. What we need is to improve the teaching of English," he added.

"Some teachers themselves have problems with English," he said.

2 men get death for sex crimes

By Tarra V. Quismundo

OLAZO

The Manila Regional Trial Court meted out yesterday the maximum penalty to Joseph Dela Paz and Eduardo Mananggas for two separate incidents of rape.

Presiding Judge Lupe of Branch 16, in separate decisions, convicted them to death for committing the crimes against seemingly helpless victims: a 16-year-old mentally challenged woman, and one who was under the influence of drugs.

Dela Paz was convicted for attacking on May 16, 1999, the victim who had the mind of a 6 ½-year-old, according to the psychiatric evaluation by the National Bureau of Investigation.

The court established that Dela Paz lured into the condo's room of their 5th floor unit while the victim was there and raped her.

Witnessed by brother

The attack was witnessed by the victim's brother, who knocked down the comfort room door after sensing that she was taking too long in using it.

The victim herself was able to relate the incident in court, despite stunted speech.

Dela Paz, who has been detained at the Manila City jail since the incident, will be transferred to the New Bilibid Prisons in Muntinlupa City.

Going with him to Muntinlupa, a concubinage worker, who has been sent to death row for raping a pregnant mentally ill maid.

Based on the victim's testimony, Mananggas enabled rape her room at about 2:30 a.m. on April 10, 2000, inside her Tondo home.

The victim, then 16, testified that Mananggas managed to get inside her house as her daughters had left it open when she went to a neighbor's house to pee.

Her husband was out at home then.

Phone hackers syndicate busted

By Alcuin Papa

A SYNDICATE tapping into telephone systems of multinational companies in the country to make illegal overseas calls was busted over the weekend by the Philippine Air Force and the Bureau of Immigration.

Eight alleged members of the syndicate, including three foreigners, were presented to the media yesterday in a press conference at the PAF headquarters in Villamor Air Base, Pasay City.

They were identified as Indian nationals Gulshan Kumar and Amar Singh, Bangladeshi Mainul Islam Raju, and Filipinos Reynaldo Jalen Paz, Ferdinand Mangubat, Edwin Tan Pico of Las Piñas City, Anthony and Edna Inciso of Malolos City, and Ivy Constantino of Pasay City.

The eight were arrested during separate raids on July 15 and July 17 in Las Piñas, Makati, Muntinlupa, Pasig and Tanauan in Cavite conducted by the 300th Air Intelligence Group of the PAF, the Philippine National Police's Special Action Force, the Immigration bureau, and the Eastern Police District.

Equipment

Seized from the suspects were cellphones, computers, modems and other equipment used in hacking into the phone lines.

The raids were ordered by a search warrant and seizure order issued by Judge Winlove Dumagas of Branch 55 of the Makati Regional Trial Court.

Eleven orders were issued by 18 Communications Major Femando for the arrest of the three foreigners.

Charges

Official explained that the suspects used the devices to hack into the PABX (Private Automatic Branch Exchange) systems of multinational companies and other offices in the country.

The suspects are facing charges of violating the Electronic Commerce Act, the Revised Penal Code, and local immigration laws.

Corporate subscribers had complained to the Philippine Long Distance Telephone company about numerous erroneous calls charged to their PLDT lines even if no such calls were made.

David Haresco, a PLDT lawyer, said the operations cost his client P1.87 million in losses, and the government, P10.7 million in revenues.

He said the PLDT would pay internal revenue commissions to companies the cost of the calls, while local companies whose lines had been used by the syndicate can choose not to pay for the calls.

"It is not farfetched to believe that this scheme is utilized by criminal individuals and syndicates involved in kidnapping and other serious crimes. Worse is that it may be used by terrorists both here and abroad," a PLDT statement said.

Victims

The phone company said the victims included 121 multinational corporations, 171 small and medium companies, 39 banks, 14 hotels, 19 government agencies, seven embassies, seven hospitals and four oil companies.

Lt. Gen. Jose Reyes, Commanding General of the PAF, said the arrest of the hackers was part of a multi agency operation to crack down on violators of laws that deprive the government of much needed revenues. With a report from AP

ARM FORCE: Gen Lt. Gen. Jose Reyes (left) and Bureau of Immigration Commissioner Alipio Fernandez (center) present alleged members of a syndicate that hack into the systems of telecommunications firms in the country.

Landlords eyed in antidrugs drive

By Nestor E. Flores and Christian R. Esguerra

THE DANGEROUS Drugs Board (DDB) asked Congress yesterday for laws that would penalize landlords who "bid to harbor their clients."

DDB Executive Director Jose Calida, reacting to the recent discovery of an illegal drugs warehouse in Valenzuela City by the police, said landlords should know their tenants well before renting out their property.

This is to ensure that it won't be used for illegal purposes like the setting up of drug laboratories.

He stressed that landlords should also carefully exercise their power of visitation to protect their property and themselves.

"Owners of rented real property should ensure that their property is being used only for lawful purposes. Those who neglect to exercise that right should be penalized," Calida said.

Calida said a new law could be patterned on the anti-money laundering law, which contains the "know your client" provision.

The police Anti-Illegal Drugs-Special Operations Task Force raided the laboratory warehouse by virtue of a warrant issued by Valenzuela City Regional Trial Court Branch 172 Judge Floro Mejia.

The raid led to the seizure of machinery and 147 drums of various chemicals that include methylene chloride, acetone, ether, chloroform, propylene glycol, chlorinated paraffin and chloly chloride. These would be used in the manufacture of shabu.

The chemicals at the warehouse owned by a certain Roger Ong and rented by one Jimmy Cocchee at the corner of Mc-Arthur and Tarquilla Streets, Villa Lauzeyaan Subdivision, was accidentally discovered by local firemen who saw their smoke billowing out of the building.

At the same time, the DDB said it would seek an amendment of the Anti-Wire Tapping Act to include big time drug pushers.

"We are fighting a multi-billion [peso] multi-national drug syndicate here. We cannot afford to go to warehouses or clandestine laboratories; they operate through electronic medium," Calida said at a press conference.

"How do you catch a criminal who's using electronic devices? Possible laws to apply to their means of carrying out their criminal activities."

Expecting a backlash from staunch human rights advocates, Calida assured the public that the enforcement agencies would not be allowed to fog drug suspects without authority from the court.

"The court will be the one to give the authority and we will of course be more able to the court for any abuses that might be committed," he said.

Calida explained that the proposed amendment expands the exemptions in the existing law which allows wire tapping in cases of rebellion and sedition.

Also developed as the police unearthed P5 million worth of shabu from two Chinese and four Filipino companions in Quezon city.

Sun Quo alias Johnny Ong, 30, Zhi Jun Ming alias Jorge Ong, 46, and Hao Jiaoman, 31, were caught in the act of selling two kilos of the banned substance at the corner of West and Quezon Avenue.

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Malabon prosecutors frown

By Edwin C. Tandoc Jr.

[illegible]

For four long years, prosecutors and their staff members in Malabon City have been looking forward to hearing their sorrow and crowded courtroom one address.

Though a new building is being constructed for them, it seems they will have to wait longer before they could move in.

Laborers working on the new city prosecutors' building in Barangay Catmon have stopped working, with about 30 percent of the project still unfinished, Malabon Prosecutor chief prosecutor Jorge Catalan told the Inquirer yesterday.

The private contractor allegedly failed to collect payments from the city government and decided to stop working on the building, according to the prosecutors' office said.

The building, which began construction during the term of then acting Mayor Jaime Yambao, was scheduled for completion on June 30.

Straight for comment, Mayor Canuto Oreta said yesterday that the contractor had not been coordinating with his office about the payment. He also said he did not terminate the contract for the building.

But Oreta assured the prosecutors the building would be completed during his term.

Just to keep their hopes alive that they would soon be able to move into their new office, the prosecutors have been contributing money for the salary of the only carpenter remaining on the building, slowly putting some floor tiles the prosecutors themselves have also bought.

The two-story building, which covers about 300 square meters, has eight rooms for prosecutors, a large room for the chief prosecutor, separate offices for the court and computer rooms, a kitchen and separate toilets.

The three assistant fiscals the prosecutors would be hearing have only three offices and one toilet for the eight prosecutors and their staff members.

BANCO DE ORO
Housing Loan

WEDNESDAY, JULY 21, 2004
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
A 26
SPORTS

TORSON (left). Fourth suspension in two years

Ax falls on Jimwell; Ginebra exec banned

By June Navarro

THE PBA Commissioner's Office yesterday recalled its reinstatement of Jimwell Torson and reimposed its earlier sanction on the Red Bull guard on top of a three-game suspension for an ugly twirldown during the Barangay Ginebra-Red Bull Finals series.

Torson struck Barangay Ginebra import Terrence Bragg on the nape during a rebound scuffle, a blatant violation of the conditions set by the league when it reinstated Torson midway through the Fiesta Conference.

Meanwhile, the PBA has banned the Barangay Ginebra marketing official who ordered team cheerleaders to tear apart a Red Bull flag during the Fiesta Conference Finals.

The Commissioner's Office has also slapped an undisclosed amount of fine on Ginebra.

"It could have been a simple matter if not for an earlier warning before the (Torson) reinstatement," said PBA commissioner Noli Eala. "In a sense, we decided to reimpose the original suspension (up to October)."

Torson, who was also suspended last year for doing an eye-gouging drippel on eight-month bar for breaking Jimmy Alapag's nose in a quarterfinal match last year.

Eala cut short the suspension in April, but warned Torson that another violation of the same nature would result in the reimposition of his earlier punishment.

"Other sports, Jimwell submitted that it was his fault. For that, he cannot join the league's off-season activities," said Eala.

It was actually the fourth time Torson got suspended in a span of two years. His list of lucky includes a fistfight with Ginebra's Dik Harris last season, a flambeé drag test, the incident with Alapag and the scuffle with Bragg.

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Stags seek 4th win in row vs Bombers

DOWNERSDUE: San Sebastian seeks to extend its winning streak to four as it tackles struggling Jose Rizal U today in the NCAA senior basketball tournament at the Rizal Coliseum.

The game, set at 2 p.m., serves as a rematch of sorts between the protagonists in last year's final four race, though the Stags and the Rosary Bombers have said contending formers this season.

In the other senior matchup, San Beda and St. Benilde aim to end their losing spells when they collide at 4 p.m.

After dropping their first two games, the Stags have gone on a three-game roll, but Sebastian arguably has the tournament's most seasoned fire five in reigning MVP Leo Mejorada, Pep Mamo, Michael Gonzales, Nicole Di and Chris Salazar, who hunted the game-finishing two in their record 74-72 whupstaid Mapua.

The Bombers, meanwhile, have yet to recover from their four-game losing spell. After winning their season opener against the University of Perpetual Help alma, the squad now looks helpless near the cellar. In fact, JRU has become this season's worst offender team with an average of 56.0 points per game.

San Beda is coming off an eight-day rest, enough time perhaps to recover from its 79-75 double overtime loss to Perpetual.

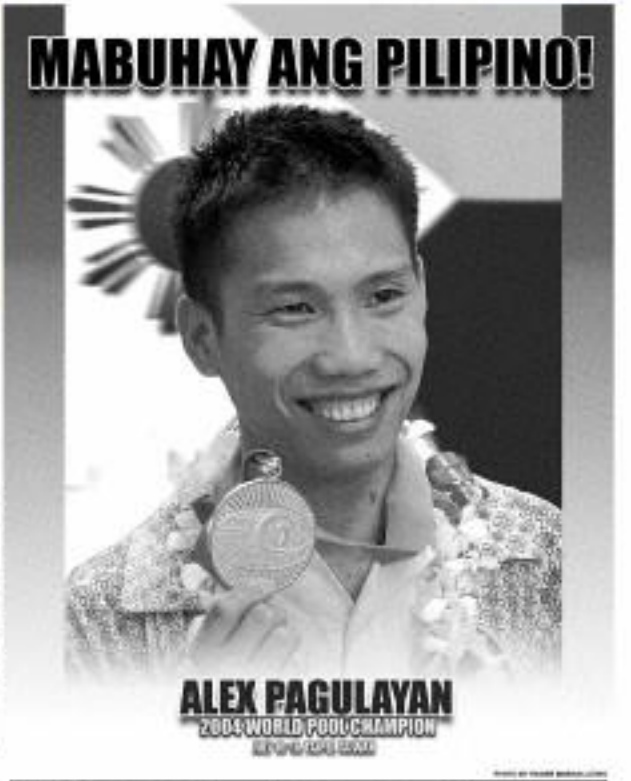
The Red Lions suffered three consecutive setbacks after squandering a 2-0 start.

Cellar dweller St. Benilde again tries to shake off its members to collapse in the second half.

The Mad Cobs, though, are coming into the period. They gun for their ninth straight win against the Generals in the second junior play at 6 p.m. The Staglets and Light Bombers tangle in the 12:30 p.m. opener. Jeanne B. Ayes

	W	L
Letran	4	1
Perpetual	4	1
Mapua	3	1
FEU	3	2
JRU	2	3
San Beda	1	3
JRU	1	4
St. Benilde	0	5

HOT FORM
Rey Reyes of Auto Bizon goes full throttle in his Honda CR-V in Round 5 of the season PCSO National Touring Car Series at the Batangas Racing Circuit. Reyes, who is also backed by Tropical Ice Sparkling Water, Jose Abling Inc., CERC and Manzanita Auto Dynamics, won the race and then finished third in Round 6 to take the overall lead in the Group N class. He clinched 1:45.998 victories in the time trials and started in front of the grid.



Lady Tams nip La Salle cagers; UP, UST shine

Diliman University eased out La Salle, 67-65, Tuesday in a thriller highlighting the onset of the UAAP women's basketball tournament at the Ateneum gym.

Marsha Stanton, one of three senior Lady Tamaraws, scored 20 points, grabbed 10 rebounds and had two blocks as UE's fifth foul came undetected in crashing to challenge defending champion Ateneum this season.

Another Lady Tamaraw playing her final year, Irene Lobrocis, contributed 11 markers.

The Lady Archers, who were third last year, had four players finishing in double figures: Christine Marie Penda with 17. Kristine Alim with 14 and Abby Arellano Olimpiero and Jen Michelle Lucero with 13 apiece.

University of the Philippines, led by Jacklyn Shaw Cua, blasted University of the East, 71-48, and Ms. 4 Ateneo, riding Limondris Noel Tiozon's 16 markers, dipped No. 7 University of Santo Tomas, 57-50, in the other opening day matches.

The Lady Fighting Maroons, who swept the Lady Maroons in their last outing of three olds series last year, drew a bye and will open their campaign against the UE Amazons at 11 a.m. on Thursday, also at the Ateneum gym.

Other matches on Sunday pit UP against UST at 8 a.m. and Ateneo against De La Salle at 9:30 a.m.

6th-round defeats pull down Pinoy chessers

ILOILO: International Masters Ronald Bancod and Aaron Gonzales bowed to their respective foes in the sixth round encounter of the Bakajaan International Open chess championship in Bakajaan, Spain.

Bancod, seeded 36th in the nine-round Swiss system event, lost to IM Florian Mainz of the Dominican Republic while 25th-seed Gonzales succumbed to GM Lubomir Kavalek. Jerry Cuadrante Gualberto Barcelon.

The defeats dropped Bancod and Gonzales—tied for second overnight—into a cluster of 22nd place finishers with others, including Canadian GM Yon Yelda, with 4 points each. Kalinda drew his match with Spanish master Jimi Serna.

Mainz, Bermuda, Udan 2nd Lanan Watson, Bulgarian GM Mladenov Ivkhov and Lithuanian GM Karo Mowaraitis share the lead with 5 points apiece. Martin Bernardino

Ramirez strikes back with twin Subic victories

Standings after 10 rounds

Main event winner: 1. L. Ramirez (Petron/IBA) 46 points; 2. J. Cuaresma (San Miguel/Mobil) 46; 3. G. Ramirez (Petron/IBA) 40; 4. E. Ramos (Petron/IBA) 39; 5. C. Jacinto (Big Red Machine) 38; 6. J. Cuaresma (Petron/IBA) 37; 7. G. Ramirez (Big Red Machine) 36; 8. E. Ramos (Petron/IBA) 35; 9. J. Cuaresma (Petron/IBA) 34; 10. G. Ramirez (Big Red Machine) 33

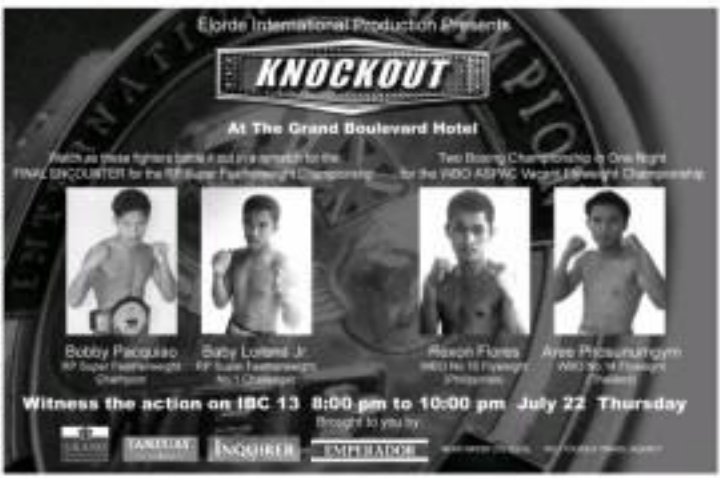
SUBIC—Louie Ramirez of Petron/IBA saved his best for last as he outlasted defending champion Jody Cuaresma of Red Horse-Cullen in a close finish Sunday to retain the overall lead after 10 rounds in the 2004 Wrangler Grand Prix at the Subic International Raceway.

Sadly unveiling a victory to halt the surging Cuaresma, winner of the last two rounds, Ramirez drove cautious to the wind and came out with the morale-boosting triumph that put him closer to his first ever title with only four rounds remaining in the 14-part series organized by Sports Motor Inc., in cooperation with Rexcar.

"It was great to win a good race. I'm so happy to win," said Ramirez, who passed Cuaresma with only three corners left before the finish.

Ramirez is hoping to follow in the footsteps of his famous father, Rodolfo, and brothers, George and Miguel, champions of this premier circuit racing competition.

Overall, Ramirez has 46 points based on the 20-6-4-3-2-1 scoring system in the Nitro super saloon series. Cuaresma, running all big monsters in four of the five rounds prior to today's races, climbed to second place overall with 40 points.



KOSLER relieves to practice, scores

Missing clubs upset Jenny's Evian Masters bid

By Mayang R. Castillo

THOUSTELOUR hours before Filipino ace Jennifer Rosales could be done for what is considered the "fifth major" in women's golf, a major hitch has given her anxious moments.

The airline carrying her luggage is a transcontinental flight to France could not account for her golf clubs.

The Evian Masters, a far junior-only event until a while ago pot of $US1.7 million, tees off today and swing coach Bong Lopez is busy finding a way to retrieve Rosales's set just to get off a practice round.

Rosales, who made the Top 10 of both the US and Canadian Opens, refused to play a practice round without her old set, which were locked in by her American caddy on a United Airlines flight from the US.

Reports said 25 golf sets were missing when the plane touched down in France, although 14 have already been recovered.

"We talked about her concern and we're ready to play a practice round when we found out that the bad set are ours," Lopez told the business "she doesn't like to practice using another set.

"I normally started looking out for a similar set which we could borrow from the club's like the other."

The Evian Masters will be played at the 6,270-yard, Evian Masters Golf Club in Evian-les-Bains today and Saturday.

Rosales is back with a group of impressive finishes, her collapse in the final round of the US Open notwithstanding.

The winner of the Ginik 50-0 Classic in June, Rosales will tee off at 9:50 a.m. in a flight with American Becky Morgan and Linda Wessberg. She finished tied for 34th in the same tournament last year with a one-over 289 on rounds of 71-73-73-72.

The 20-year-old will be coming off a two-second win Lopez has pinned her to the final two legs to secure the Order of Merit title for the second straight year. Rosales is competing in the Women's British Open in Sunningdale, England, next week.

Ad. Solano is the defending champion of the Evian event.

PBA All-Star fives named

Reserves include Miller, Caguioa, Hontiveros

By Jane Navarro

THE REMAINDER of the players for the All-Star teams were named yesterday after balloting among the PBA coaches.

Talk 'N Text's Willie Miller, Ginebra's Mark Caguioa, Red Bull's Jimmy Mariano, and Sta. Miguel's Jay Velasquez, and Sta. Miguel's Jay Velasquez, and Sta. Miguel's Jay Velasquez

WEDNESDAY
JULY 21, 2004

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

B1

BUSINESS

Gov't misses budget deficit target

Stocks hit 5-week low

By Michelle V. Remo

THE GOVERNMENT'S budget deficit reached P80.1 billion in the first half of the year, missing by a slight margin its P78.6-billion target for the period.

Documents from the Department of Finance showed that the government's failure to meet the first-half deficit target was due to overspending by government agencies. The DOF said in a statement that expenditure for the first six months of the year stood at P420.4 billion, or 2.7 percent higher than the P412.4-billion ceiling.

For June alone, government spending reached P87.3 billion, up 8.1 percent from last year's P82.99 billion.

According to the Department of Budget and Management, the higher-than-programmed spending was partly due to funding requirements of the recent elections, and payment of pension and retirement benefits of policemen and other government personnel.

Budget Secretary Emilia Boncodin said the government might not duplicate the higher-than-expected spending in the second half because education-related expenditure and release of benefits were only one-time payment.

She added that a large part of the problems for the first half was accounted for by capital outlay setback. She said that "capital spending" has risen to helped lower the scattering.

Revenue for the first six months of the year reached P940.29 billion, or 3.1 percent higher than the P912.4-billion target. Revenue for the period was also 12.4 percent higher than the P805.5 billion recorded during the first six months of 2003.

The better revenue collection performance of the government was attributed to the ability of the Bureau of Customs and the Bureau of Treasury to exceed their targets by wide margins. Their performance compensated the failure of the Bureau of Internal Revenue to meet its own collection target.

For the first half, the BOC collected P90.9 billion, surpassing its target by 13.7 percent. The Treasury collected P26.5 billion, exceeding its revenue target by 32.6 percent. On the other hand, the BIR, which accounts for about 80 percent of government's revenue, collected P529.2 billion, missing by a thin margin to P534.5-billion target.

Although the government missed its deficit target for the first half, the DOF said the small gap between the target and the actual deficit figure will indicate some sign of fiscal discipline in the government.

In May, the deficit already hit more than P77 billion, leaving the government only with about P2 billion for June to still meet the first-half target of P78.6 billion. While the deficit for a month usually stood at about P7 billion, the government was able to keep the deficit at only P5.771 billion in June. The June deficit was an improvement from the P43.2-billion deficit recorded during the same month last year.

UCPB fails to sell bad assets

By Doris C. Dumlao

UNITED Coconut Planters Bank failed to sell any of its P1.5 billion worth of non-performing assets as offers submitted during a Special Purpose Rebuy (SPR) auction on Monday stood below the floor price.

Bank president Jose Quesada said in a statement yesterday that UCPB was still committed to unload its bad assets and was near to talks with financial advisers Price-waterhouseCoopers on the possibility of a second round of bidding.

"We got feedback that the bad debt was not long time to be able to submit a more aggressive bid," Quesada said.

UCPB rejected all the sealed bids submitted during the bidding.

Four of the bids did not conform to the documentary requirements of the bank's auction while the other two were below the minimum price range, which in turn was based on the 2000 range recommended by PricewaterhouseCoopers.

But Quesada said the bank would give the bidders another chance to make their bids conform to the bank's requirements.

Imports down 1.6% in May; 5-mo trade gap at $1.06B

THE COUNTRY'S imports declined by 1.6 percent in May to $3.26 billion, reversing the growth posted the previous months, but economists say the slight decrease did not necessarily mean the recovery was slowing down.

The $3.26-billion imports in May almost matched exports for the month at $3.16 billion, resulting in a small trade deficit of $98 million, or much lower than the $566 million recorded in May last year.

May imports also brought the cumulative imports figure for the first five months of the year to $16.04 billion, or 5.1 percent high, or than the $15.68 billion in the same period last year. The trade deficit for the first five months of 2004 stood at $1.06 billion, or lower than last year's $1.40 billion.

The lower imports in May were partly due to the decline in purchases of electronics products, raising concern the country's electronics exports might be headed for a downturn in the coming months.

Electronic products, which account for the bulk of the country's import bill, are used as inputs for electronics exports. The electronics and semiconductor sector is the biggest dollar earner among local industries, accounting for more than half of the country's exports.

Data from the National Statistics Office showed that the country spent only $1.61 billion for imported electronics components in May, or 7.6 percent lower than the amount recorded during the same month last year.

Romulo Neri, director general of the National Economic and Development Authority, downplayed the slight decrease in electronics imports, saying this could be temporary. He added that the Semiconductor and Electronics Industry of the Philippines Inc. (Seipi), the biggest group of electronics firms in the country, was bullish of meeting at least a 10-percent export growth this year.

Ishoshima Cervantes, officer in charge of Neda's planning and policy office, said the slowdown in May import's could be explained by the fact that the country's demand for oil was beginning to normalize. She said the country had to pay more for imported oil last year following the Iraq war.

According to report from the NSO, imports for mineral fuels, lubricants and related materials fell to $366.38 million in May or 9.1 percent lower than the $403.77 million recorded in May 2003. Michelle V. Remo

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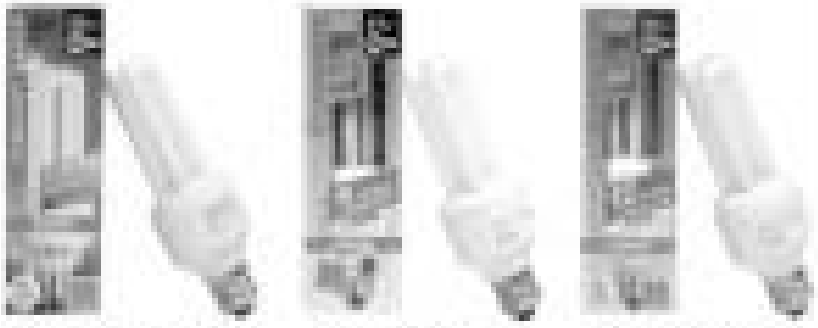

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Nextel plans P1-B rights offer to fund expansion

By Clarissa S. Batino

TELECOMMUNICATIONS firm Next Mobile Inc. plans a P1-billion stock rights offering late this year to fund its expansion program.

Next Mobile president Mel Velarde said the bulk of the proceeds would be used to expand its network over the next two years to 15 urban areas, including Cebu, Davao, Bacolod, Cagayan de Oro and Baguio.

Part of the money would also be used to fine-tune its current network, which services about 20,000 subscribers.

Next Mobile claims to be the country's first and only fully integrated digital wireless operator.

It provides combined digital two-way radio, mobile communications and data services.

Next Mobile planned to increase its subscribers by 20,000 this year, hoping it closer to rolling in maximum capacity of 100,000 subscribers.

Next Mobile rid its system last year of unprofitable subscriber plans and promos. It focused instead on clients in need of the combined two-way radio, phone and data services.

Velarde added that the rights offering would come at the heels of its first follow listing on the Philippine Stock Exchange, through underwriter Philippine Commercial International.

Velarde said the company would then be known as Next Communications.

PSE acquired 49 percent of Next Mobile through a share swap deal in November last year.

Under the agreement, PSE acquired 1,176 million of the Next Mobile's common shares for P1.76 billion.

In exchange, PSE issued 11.76 million common shares to Next Mobile shareholders.

Next Mobile is owned by a consortium of Filipino, Swedish, American and Filipino investors led by Velarde.

On the other hand, PSE is owned by Top Kliq Enterprises B.V., Investra Holdings B.V., Gamboa Holdings B.V., Investel B.V., Nationwide B.V. and Bankcorp Investments Philippines Inc.

PSE also aims to conduct open outcry trading of equities and acquired Pemsel to start its clearing and settlement functions for securities and derivatives trading.

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There's something about Surigao

The province has earned the title 'Surfing Capital' of the Philippines, and not because people there go online a lot.

By Shalvari Gloria
INQ7 Correspondent

GOVERNOR Lyndon Barbers has described Surigao as one of the "places on Earth left undiscovered and unexplored."

This is true. The wild and unpaved roads of the different municipalities all lead to paradise. Traveling to the different hot spots may be long and tiring, but they're all worth it.

Beauty indeed abounds in this place that may, and can, do to its visitors' time, give the weary a run for its money.

Composed of three large islands, Surigao has easily earned the title Surfing Capital of the Philippines because of its fantastic waves and annual surfing competitions.

Surfer's paradise

From the Garden Pavilion, where we were booked, we went to Siargao island, a one-hour boat ride from the mainland. It is impossible to describe Siargao without using the words breathtaking and stunning. There were simply too many things to see, do and experience here.

Our base for the overnight stay on Siargao was Pagsukian. Staying here costs a few hundred dollars a night, but it's completely rest and relaxation you're looking for, this is the place—the only place, I might add—to be. It consists of several large and comfy cottages of eclectic Asian design, plus a bar and recreation area. My favorite spot is a

TURN TO 12

LEAVE the city behind and find comfort in nature.

A PIECE of unexplored paradise

There's something about Surigao

From page B1

gazebo with a spectacular view of the vast, untouched blue sea.

Cloud 9 is where the annual surfing competitions are held in September, when the waves are really good. There wasn't much surf and not many surfers when we got there, but once in the water, we could tell the waves could indeed get really strong.

The locals weren't really sure how Cloud 9 got its name. Some said the foreigners who discovered the place was eating Cloud 9 chocolate bars while surfing. Others claimed the waves here could reach nine feet high. Whatever—the place simply lifted you up.

Naked island

Not those who enjoy the sun more than the surf, Naked Island is the best choice. But we, despite its name, there are no naked women or hunks lying around sunbathing.

The Island, or later as we'll try it, is a small strip of sand and nothing else—save a single palm tree to protect you from the sun.

Another destination to enjoy is Bukwot cave, actually a tunnel leading to a lagoon with several islets and more caves. The cool water is half submerged in water and is only accessible during low tide.

Despite our group's traveling on two small boats as we could easily slip through the narrow passage, are still thrilled to enter as it was already high tide. We wouldn't have run the risk of getting stuck there overnight.

But we managed to do a Spongebob outside the cave and catch friendly jellyfish with our bare hands.

Bring home the tuna

When shopping for pasalubong in Surigao, forget about boats, caving and handicraft. Instead, grab a bayong and head for the palengke.

After the generous treated us to dinner in his linan on the eve of our departure, I could not stop talking about the tuna. It was so good it almost ruined like here.

In the market, I got the best bargain for pasalubong—two large tuna for less than P200. The fish, save the tail and head, were the length of computer keyboards. Imagine tuna that's so plump, tender and juicy and coming only a bocolan of Cagayan de Oro.

Surigao can be reached direct from Manila via the Asian Spirit airlines. What are you waiting for?

SURIGAO is a place for appreciating beauty and interacting with creatures of the sea.

Open to all Super! readers

Check out July 24 issue of Super! for free invites

Tired of waiting for a problematic ex-GF

DEAR Mark and Sep,

September last year, my girlfriend broke up with me because of her family's financial problems. I must admit that up to now, I'm still head over heels in love with her.

I asked her for another chance to work things out between us. She told me she still loved me, and I could feel that. But she rejected my offer because of her problem.

Nitz Mark Soliven & September Mabitto

She told me she was scared that I might get hurt again, and that she couldn't promise me anything.

I love this girl so much more than anything else in this world, and I really can't afford to lose her. Her problem would still be a problem with or without the relationship. I want to share and support her in any way I can, just to show how much I care for and love her.

I'm willing to wait, but until when? It's been a year now, and I'm getting tired. How long do I have to wait for her? What should I do?

VANCE

The thing with waiting is that sometimes, you don't know when, what or whom you're waiting for. Sometimes. So the really patient ones wait some more and get super surprised, like those beauty pageant contestants called to join the top 10, while the impatient ones go for something or someone else.

I think the problem is, you are expecting her to get back with you despite the fact that she already told you she couldn't promise you anything.

You say you love this girl more than anything else in the world. You say you can't afford to lose her. You say you're willing to wait for her. So stop whining and just wait some more.

If you feel she's not worth all the waiting or that she's been giving you a long list of silly, maybe you can then force yourself to let go and move your attention to someone else.

May the force be with you.

MARK

It's a battle between love and pride, isn't it? Some would happily swallow pride for a little love. Others would do just the opposite.

The catch is, you can never tell which person would choose what. But if you want a tip, I'll give you one: 'Yes ate ay love with a girl who has a lot of pride. I should know. It takes one to know one.

Now, with that bit of knowledge, do you have a clearer idea of what you need to do or, more important, what you want to happen?

Let me try another track.

How well do you know this girl, anyway? Is she the "tulak ng bibig, kabig ng dibdib" type? Because there are girls out there who are strong, even tough, but are actually really hurt when you take them up on their "Love me more" bluffs.

Worse, there are types who give guys just enough string to hang on to—and to hang themselves in the process. Do you know your sweetheart well enough to be sure that this is not the case with her?

My guess is, I don't know who this girl is and how worthy she is of the sacrifice you're making. I can only give out weird case guesses to help you keep your perspective.

If you think she's worth the wait, then by all means wait for her. But if you are already losing patience, all your bullying in the world won't change her mind.

It's not a matter of how much longer you'd have to wait, either. One year, two years—that is not up for you to decide but for her. She'll realize if and when she wants to.

If all that just makes you feel more frustrated and powerless, then here's an important reminder: You can choose not to get the short end of the stick.

You can tell her goodbye, walk away and find another girl to love.

Personally, I think this is the way to go. But then, I really have no say in the matter. You'd only act if and when you want to.

SEPTEMBER

E-mail the writers at marksep@yahoo.com. Clarkson is inviting the letter writers to indicate if they want their e-mail address printed to encourage thirsty soul types out there can get in touch with the problematic readers and send in their comments and advice.

BE SPIDER-MAN!

At Pink Parks in Boracay, you can forget about sea and sand and learn the art of wall climbing instead

By Margot Anne C. Tan
PDI Correspondent

FORGET the sea. For any hardcore beach enthusiast, there's nothing like strong winds and soaring waves to awaken the adventurer in you.

On top of getting a sore loss and getting yourself (or your date) drunk, whenever the mood, there are precious a wide array of activities to keep you hopping for more.

All you need to do is book a room at Pink Parks. The resort prides itself in arranging activities for your every fantasy—from banana boat rides, ecosystems and water sports such as jet skiing, parasailing, diving and snorkeling, to island-hopping. (Crystal Cove, Crocodile Island and the famous Puka beach).

The highly touted resort recently hosted Boracay's iconic wall climbing competition, "King Lover." Tourists and local tourists took on the challenge of scaling heights designed for adults and children.

Jude Agrabio, the competition judge and officer-in-charge of Pink Parks recreation area, explained that wall climbing was special.

THEY make Pink Parks go wild.

"Well, physically it deals a lot with flexibility and upper body strength. At the same time, it's also mentally demanding. When you climb, it's really similar to solving a puzzle. Routes are put up, and you have to read your way to the top... Simply put, climbing takes a lot of physical and mental discipline," he said.

"If you love the outdoors, you'd probably enjoy wall climbing. Members of the climbing community have varied backgrounds, but most of them are outdoor lovers. Instead of going to the gym (which could prove to be boring for some), you could work out or stay active (climbing flexibly and by different routes. It's very challenging, and you get to progress to more difficult levels. You could even find yourself saying out natural skills make a great amount of friends," he added.

Agrabio's tips for beginners emphasized "training, training, training." One really needs a good practice to become adept at this demanding sport.

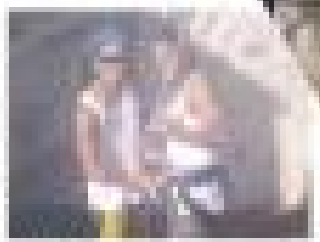
Plus, of course, not down on the wrist. No climbing, anything to hold tight on as much as possible, especially when you want to complete.

But most of all, "just have fun," he said. That, in the end, is the most important ingredient.

The winners of Pink Parks's wall climbing contest were:

Women's category—first place: Kim Su-Jung (Island Globe Resort), second place: Rowena Lumagui (Hilton), third place: Kathleen Ann de los Santos (Island Globe Resort).

Men's category: first place—Andrew Gerard Bela (Manilaner), second place: Tommy Magno (Asia Resources), third place: Robert Wilson (Island Resort).



READY for action.

BIG winners.

A PARTICIPANT secures herself to the top.

25 LIFESTYLE

UTT-erly 'aroused'

Text by Inqy

IMAGINE all bonding not via pantry. I almost say Friday night at Manchester. I stood in a long, dimmed curling between him might telly silliwings, shifting from "Friends" to "Imbestigado," going through the latest infotainment and TTL hopping on to a panel of the show and then finally deciding to turn the tube off.

I don't get to watch that much TV, as I opt to meditate and workout, so I get home from an all-night party hop, sit myself in transformed the giant TV from my old flat to my maid's room to fast experiment as whatever I do have to watch something ("The Hunt," "U Pilot," "Master Showman," or all. I have to squeeze time for it. do room to get all the book-value action.

In that short span of airtime that I caught, I realized that ballets commercials are all the rage on late night TV that any human female has a the cue of an unbalanced (the Cambridge Diet) and that Dolay, the diet, is more-to-have of "500 Club." Also on like Movies, I found out. I have a movie look-alike in "The Touch" (Michelle Reis's brother), played by Brandon Chang). At ner I got tired of looking at my ex-ex ago on the small screen. I decided to head out to Pasha for my added B&B night. It was 8 p.m., and Carlos was still hot and hopping.

No, such thing as too late to go out these days enough for kids with curfews. Or sponsors to pay. Latest to tour body. If you feel like going out, first paint the town red. If you feel like staying home, first get a few friends together for a thriller-ing home party!

Real Mansion

Speaking of painting the town red, I hopped by the MBC party at Dome of Japan where I got to hang out with family for the Catriona Fernandez's estate. Thank heavens for good friends that the drink I consumed garnered the highest bid for the night. My last-minute sushi arrival (as well as the girls gave me huge tips for serving them Skyy vodka all night. Now I have another career to look forward to.

On the subject of home parties, photographer-to-the-pols Heinz Cunningh had one of the pad (pad to us undercoverers). Bigbash held to Mercuriantini party at his South Forbes home to launch Mercurado's 2004 menu.

As of last head count, more than 600 people had crashed his home. (I don't know if his parents know about it—well, they do now). That number is still small if you compare it with the 1pm Pasha party at the MBC Tent, where thousands of partygoers converged in the name of house music. "Nothing was damaged, thank God," I overheard Vic tell a friend the next morning.

Saturday, and I was off to a quiet weekend until I learned that my Singapore-based Thai buddy was in town. In to a space of a few hours, me and my bubble bestie, Iger-Cyrus, held an impromptu get-together to welcome Dimaala Gang Headschool, aka MTV VJ Ert.

The new and the new

We got a long table at the second floor of Bistro and gathered other like-minded young people as we hunted on plus Hope food and toasted to more exciting times ahead. How very apt, celebrating the "new and the now," since Vi Un was here on-to-tape promo shoot with MTV India VJ Anusha called "MTV Brand New."

MTV VJs Sarah Meier, Cindy Kuchela and RC Concepcion joined the fun as they compared notes on VJ-hood. I sensed a twinkle in Ert's eyes every time he smell-talked with our RC. In fact, he was wearing a tee with the print, "Stressed." But maybe that's just me.

Later, Amalia begged me to take her to a dance place—so we all hopped in carry to Valenti B Bay Mark Reyes was having his joint birthday party with Jay and her commercial director Al Roxas. There, a breakdance showdown ensued (expected), but nonetheless overwhelming) as losers of Hip and hip-hop had a field day on the dance floor.

In the middle of the sweaty parties! Boo was this palpable, infectious energy that just made you dance. Credit goes to promoters Johnny "Bebe" Lim Jun Barrera—everybody has an alias these days) and MC Stephen Bu for making partypeople feel at home, plus the wicked generous of

for B Bay crew, led by Mark Reyes and friends dance extended Lenna Dias.

March, much later, I decided to duck in at the Mandarin Oriental Hotel where we had another un-planned party—a pajama party! A friend cashed his entire paycheck to many pajamas as he could, and rode breakfast in bed, bonding and jamming (Bed Bar goes to Mandarin) until are all fell asleep.

Spontaneity is an understatement in the art of planned fun. Some times, we should just drop the take-charge attitude and simply flow on, letting the moments lead us to adventure and exploration. You'll never know what to expect.

PRETTY purses. P450 each.

WEAR your heart on your bag. P495

GET fruity. P1,250 each

DOT dot. Transparent bag, P450

FASHION FREAKS

Fashion explosion in Laguna

DOTS can be sexy. Tops, P395 each

By Pam Perez
Photos by Chito Velez

GREAT finds can jump at you in the most unexpected places.

On a quick pit stop from a trip to Dagupan, a booth inside a little mall in Laguna caught our attention. There were watches and bracelets of all colors, bags with eye-catching designs, cute shirts and shoes. But we didn't have enough time to take a real look, since we were all in a hurry to get home.

Months later, we had more time on our hands. We hesitated. Then and Thereafter cannot Margie S. Mecia to drive us there.

Margie, who travels abroad regularly to search for more goodies, has a great eye for fashion finds. Her collections are unique and colorful.

The best part? Her stocks are limited, so you don't have to worry about seeing someone else wearing the exact same thing.

When asked if she ever gets tired of shopping, Margie replied with a smile, "Never."

Now that's a true fashion freak for you.

So you want the Fashion Freaks to visit your store or look at your wares? E-mail us at chetlad@inet.com.ph.

Visit Tess and Things Branches at 2/F, Makromayo in Real Colombo City (049/5450819) and 2/F SP Road in Colombo City (046/5450955). Call Margie at (0917-5004435) for she can bring the goods to you.

SEXY tops. Prices available upon request

BEADED beauties. Chiffon tops, P450 each

EMBROIDERED cellphone cases. Price available upon request

FLAUNT these great legs. Trousers, P480

ANIMAL crazy. Bedroom slippers, P195 per pair

CHECK up your jeans with these bib belts. P120 each

BUCKLE UP. Belts, P220 each

RAINBOW connection. Cellphone cases, P240 each

Impress Hoobastank and win two concert tickets!

HOOBASTANK fans can get a chance to win concert tickets to "Hoobastank Live in Manila"—"The Reason Tour" on Aug. 17 at the Folk Arts Theater, simply by letting their creativity flow.

Just send us your most unique Hoobastank memorabilia or artwork (album cover, tattoo design, graffiti art, etc). E-mail your entries at ask-me2find@inquirer.com.ph, or send it to Inocencia, Chito Velez Jr., Lot, Tupaz and Mercantio Inc., thinker, together with your name, age, address and contact number.

Our winner will be chosen (we'll work until Aug. 1) and will get a pair of tickets. Our runner-up will also be given tickets to the event, courtesy of Mobile 8 and Globe.

The winner is presented by Smart Bubbly, BEST and the Cantina in cooperation with Citizen Jeans and Watches.

Call Ticketworld at 891-9999, a limited number of tickets is available.

Hoobastank is best known for the monster hit "The Reason." Its other hits include "Crawling in the Dark," "Running Away," "Remember Me," all from their self-titled debut album. Now hot from their latest album, "The Reason," Hoobastank's platinum album includes "Out of Control," "Same Direction," "Disappear" and "The Reason."

WATCH out for Hoobastank's concert on Aug. 17.

Other partners in the upcoming concert are Smart Addict, official receiver Mercedes Hotel, Pedge Magazine and radio station Magic 89.9, 99.5 RT, 103.1 K-Lite, 104.3 L-Jazz, 93.5 wave FM, 107.

Do you want a bag?

PARTICIPATE in 24/7's Ultimate Mommy forever and win one of two bags. Send your complete answers to the following questions to me.hoobastank_2@yahoo.com.

The first 50 responders will get the bags courtesy of Celebrash.

GET your hands on these bags.

A. SAVINGS

1. Where do you get your money?
a. allowance from parents/guardians
b. job
c. job and allowance from parents/guardians

2. How much allowance do you get every month?
a. less than P1,000
b. P1,000-P5,000
c. P5,000-P9,000
d. P9,000-P11,000
e. P11,000 above

3. If working, how much are you paid every month?
a. no salary for work
b. P5,000 below
c. P5,000-P7,000
d. P7,000-P11,000
e. P11,000-P15,000
f. P15,000 above

B. EXPENSES

Every month, how much do you spend on:

1. food
a. none
b. P1,000
c. P1,000-P3,000
d. P3,000-P5,000
e. P5,000 above

2. clothes
a. none
b. P1,000 below
c. P1,000-3,000
d. P3,000-P5,000
e. P5,000 above

3. transportation (gas/fare)
a. none
b. P500 below
c. P500-P1,000
d. P1,000-P3,000
e. P3,000-P5,000
f. P5,000 above

4. House rent
a. none
b. P500-P1,000
c. P1,000-P3,000
d. P3,000-P5,000
e. P5,000 above

5. Contribution to the family
a. none
b. P500 below
c. P500-P1,000
d. P1,000-P3,000
e. P3,000-P5,000
f. P5,000 above

6. Movies (VCD's, cassette tapes, live performances)
a. none
b. P450 below
c. P450-P900
d. P900-P1,800
e. P1,800 above

7. Shopping (clothes, shoes, bags or the sometimes)
a. none
b. P500 below
c. P500-P1,000
d. P1,000-P3,000
e. P3,000 above

8. Food (eating out, snacks, fast food/restaurants)
a. none
b. P500 below
c. P500-P1,000
d. P1,000-P3,000
e. P3,000 above

9. Miscellaneous (utilities, load, gifts, etc.)
a. none
b. P500 below
c. P500-P1,000
d. P1,000-P3,000
e. P3,000 above

10. Cell phone load
a. none
b. P500 below
c. P500-P900
d. P900-P1,800
e. P1,800 above

C. SAVINGS

1. How much do you save every month?
a. none
b. P500 below
c. P500-P1,000
d. P1,000-P5,000
e. P5,000 above

2.
1. Have you ever been in debt?
a. yes
b. no

2. Do you have a credit card?
a. yes
b. no

3. Do you have a bank account?
a. yes
b. no

4. What do you do when you run out of money?